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THE
BUNDLE OF STICKS
OR
LOVE AND HATE.



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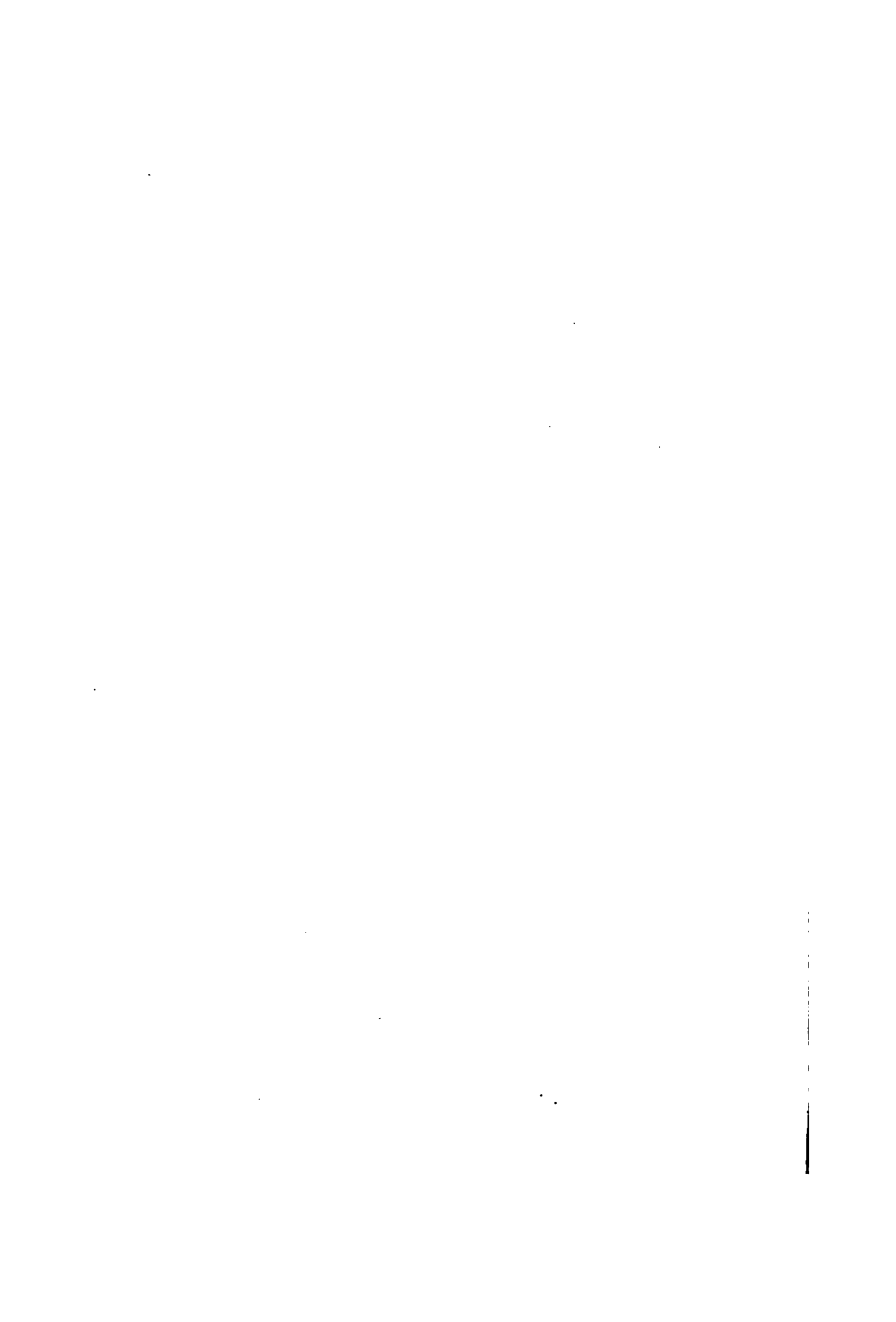




THE
1
BUNDLE OF STICKS;

OR,

Love and Hate.





LILLA VISITING MARIAN.

THE
BUNDLE OF STICKS;

OR,

Love and Hate.



BY

MARY & ELIZABETH KIRBY,

AUTHORS OF "THE DISCONTENTED CHILDREN," "THE TALKING BEED," "JULIA MAYLAND," "PLANTS
OF THE LAND AND WATER," "STORIES FROM THE CLASSICS," "TRUTH IS ALWAYS
BEST," "THE CHILD'S LEGEND OF ST. VALENTINE," ETC.

"Domestic bliss, that like a harmless dove,
(Honour and sweet endearment keeping guard,)
Can centre in a little quiet nest
All that desire would fly for through the earth;
That can, the world eluding, be itself
A world enjoy'd, that wants no witnesses
But its own sharers, and approving Heaven:
That, like a flower deep hid in rocky cleft,
Smiles though 'tis looking only at the sky."

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THE BUNDLE OF STICKS.



CHAPTER I.

It was a regular old-fashioned winter. When the snow kept falling noiselessly down, day after day, and night after night, until it had blocked up the roads, shut country people into their houses, and made it difficult for the inhabitants of the town of Linford to get out of doors at all. Men of business, it is true, pretended to make light of it, and sallied forth every morning, just as usual; but even they did not much like to face the bitter wind that turned so sharp round the corners of the streets, and were glad enough when evening came, and they could lock up their desks and counting-houses, and bask in the genial warmth of their own firesides.

Evening was the most comfortable time just then. The morning was so bleak, and chill, and pitiless! It was so dreary to look out upon the snow heaped up in the streets, and to hear nothing but the scraping of the spades as men shovelled it away,—so unpleasant the thought of having to go through it, and to see every one looking so pinched and so blue, from the milk-boy, who swings his arms backwards and forwards, and stamps his feet on the ground, in the

vain hope of warming them, to the rich man who rolls along in his carriage, and is not much less in danger of freezing.

But evening comes at last, and there is some chance of comfort then ; when the shops and warehouses are all shut up,—when the milk-boy has finished his rounds and gone home to warm himself, and the rich man is sitting down to his dinner,—when the fire is made to burn so brightly, and the easy chair is set ready for papa, and the shutters are closed, and the curtains are drawn, and children's faces look bright and happy in the firelight. And when at last his well-known knock is heard, there is a clamour of voices, and a rush of little feet, and even Baby toddles along, and tries to get the first kiss, be it as cold as it may.

Papa is a happy man, when he has got rid of his wrappers, and has nothing to do but to enjoy his own fireside, and hear all the wonderful sayings and doings of the day : how one has finished her sampler, and another has been sliding on the pond ; how Baby has been sitting at the dinner-table for the first time, and his little pet, who looks so demure, has been into the school-room, and made a beginning of her A, B, and C.

These things, and many more quite as important, make papa forget the cold and the discomforts of the day, and that to-morrow morning he shall have to sally forth again into the snow, and hear the scraping of the spades, and see the frost upon the window-pane as hard as ever.

But in the house into which we are going to peep, nothing of this kind happens. The evening has come, the curtains are drawn ; there are cheerful voices, and children's

faces look bright and happy in the firelight; but no one listens for papa, or expects to hear his knock, and his easy chair is not brought forward from its place. The little group are orphans. Mr. Woodford, their papa, died not long ago, and he has left them in charge of his friend and neighbour, Mr. Harland, who is a rich manufacturer, and has it in his power to do them a great deal of good.

Let us take a glance at them, as they gather round the fire this winter's night.

Marian, the eldest girl, that quiet, matronly little thing, is only fifteen; but she has the heart of a woman for all that: strong in her resolve to do what is right, and yet full of patience and tenderness to the younger ones, Carry and Richard, who never remember what it was to have a mother. In the eyes of Carry and Richard, Marian is all perfection. Whatever she says, and whatever she does, is right, must be right, and cannot be altered for the better. She has had the care of them ever since she was a child herself; played with them, told them stories, and heard them say their prayers night and morning. And young and slight as she is, she keeps the house, manages the domestic affairs, and even cross old Sally in the kitchen holds her in reverence.

Philip, the eldest boy, is just eighteen. He is a fine-looking fellow, full of fire and spirit, but with the same large loving heart as Marian. He only wishes he were quite grown up, that he might provide for his sisters and his little brother, and make a smooth path for them in the world. His very soul is knit to Marian; and as for Carry and Richard, he does not think any children in the world are to be found like them. He is never tired of making

dolls' houses for Carry, and would willingly snip up all the paper in the house into little men and women to please her. As to conjuring tricks, and tricks of every kind, no one can beat him, and he has been the life and soul of the play-room through this long and tedious winter.

Carry is a little black-eyed thing, with cheeks like a peach, and a quantity of curls, not always in the neatest order, thanks to her brother Philip. She is a famous hand at play, and knows every game that can be thought of; she is besides a dear lover of story-books, and will sit and listen to them by the hour together.

Richard is a delicate child about ten years old, and has Carry's black eyes without her rosy cheeks. He is very thoughtful for his age, and has a great desire to know about everything. He is not so lively, or so fond of play, as Carry; his voice is often missed for a long time together, and then he is found poring over a book in a corner.

To-night the conversation turns upon a very interesting topic—what is to be done with Philip? There are two or three things in prospect for him, but nothing can be decided upon until Mr. Harland's next visit.

The whole family stand in great dread of Mr. Harland. He looks so stern, and his face has such deep lines in it, and never brightens up, as their papa's used to do the minute he came in. And then he is always in a hurry, and treads so heavily, and wears such creaking boots, and has a disagreeable way of saying "Pshaw!" to everything that is suggested. Nobody likes to see him sit down in papa's own easy chair, with his rugged brow, and keen unfeeling eyes, in the place of that loving countenance which was wont to smile upon them, and to make them happy.

Philip was all anxiety to be an architect, and he and his sister were talking about it, and wondering what it would cost. Marian thought it would cost a great deal, and be a long time before any profit came of it. But Philip was very sanguine, and felt quite certain if he only had the chance he should succeed, and be in the end as great a man as Mr. Wilkinson—a successful architect who lived in the town. He wished very much to be articled to Mr. Wilkinson; but their guardian, Mr. Harland, had to be consulted, and they were sadly afraid his “Pshaws!” would put an extinguisher on the matter.

But it was a matter that had cost poor Philip many a sleepless night. His talents all lay in that direction, and it would be very hard to be thwarted in the most cherished desire of his heart. Still he was not unlikely to be thwarted, for it would take a handsome sum to article him to Mr. Wilkinson, and the orphans had been left with a narrow income. Mr. Harland never failed to remind them of this, every time he came, in a manner exceedingly unpleasant to Philip, and that made him shrink from entering on his favourite scheme to one so harsh and unsympathizing.

“It seems very selfish of one not to give it up when so many difficulties lie in the way,” said he; “but it will not be selfish in the end, for I know I can do it. I have wanted to be an architect ever since I can remember, and used to dream about the beautiful drawings I was making, and the buildings I was planning, and I dream about them now every night of my life; and if Mr. Wilkinson would only take me, I should make my fortune.”

“Well, dear, if it lay with us you should be articled to

"Young man,"—he always called him young man, which Philip rather liked,—"young man, you have now your own way to make in the world, and considering the slender income left by Mr. Woodford, your father——"

"Oh yes—yes, sir!" interrupted Philip, who could never help the blood tingling in his cheeks when Mr. Harland made this, his customary allusion, "I am quite prepared to make my way in the world——"

"Considering, I say," persisted Mr. Harland, who hated to be interrupted, "considering, I say, the slender income left you by Mr. Woodford, your father, it is necessary you should follow at once some kind of business——"

"Profession, if you please, sir," interposed Philip.

"Some kind of business," continued Mr. Harland, bringing a tremendous frown to bear upon poor Philip, "which may enable you to provide for your own maintenance. Now it happens that there is a vacancy in my warehouse in South Street, and I should not mind, considering the circumstances of the case——"

Mr. Harland paused and fixed his keen eye on Philip. He expected him to burst out with an expression of surprise and gratitude. But no such thing. Philip sat quite still, his eyes riveted on the cinders in the grate, where he had been making out castles and palaces, about as real as his own schemes seemed likely to be.

"I should not mind," continued Mr. Harland, "considering the circumstances of the case,—I should not mind taking you to fill that vacancy. You could earn enough for your board at all events, and by-and-by you might do something better."

Philip winced, but made no answer.

"It is a good start for you, young man, and I can tell you, you will never get such another." And Mr. Harland rubbed his chin complacently, his eye fixed all the time upon Philip.

"Sir," began Philip, clearing up and trying to speak boldly, for he felt that his architectural project trembled in the balance; "I beg your pardon, sir; I am very sorry, indeed—but really——"

"We are very much obliged to you for your kindness, sir," said Marian, with great simplicity; "but Philip wishes to be an architect. He thinks his talents all lie in that direction, and that if he could be articled to Mr. Wilkinson, he should make his fortune. I have been waiting till you came, sir, to ask what it would cost?"

While Marian made this little speech, which was exactly what Philip wanted to say, only he could not get it out, Mr. Harland's eyes opened wider and wider; and when she had finished, he replied very shortly: "It would cost two or three hundred pounds, and then he would have to provide for himself. Any further questions, Miss Marian?"

"Well, sir," continued Marian, a little startled by the sum, but returning to the charge like a brave general, "well, sir, do you think we could do it?"

"Do it!—do what?" said Mr. Harland impatiently.

"I mean, raise the two or three hundred pounds, and let Philip be an architect," persisted Marian; "he has a great talent for it,—poor papa always said he had, and promised he should carry it out as soon as he was old enough."

"And I am sure I would do my utmost to succeed," put in Philip, his voice trembling with eagerness. "I should

study night and day; and I know in the end it would answer. You say yourself, sir, that what a man likes the best, he does the best."

"And pray what are you to live upon, while you are doing your best?" asked Mr. Harland, coldly.

"Oh, he can live at home as usual," said Marian; "we shall like that very much indeed, for then we shall all be together," and she looked affectionately at her brother.

"But where are the three hundred pounds to come from?" continued Mr. Harland. "Pshaw! nonsense! put such stuff out of your heads. Philip can no more be an architect than I can."

"Oh, Mr. Harland, do not say so!" cried Marian; "I think we could manage it. We would all ~~push together~~, sir; we do not mind ~~what we do~~, or ~~what we give up~~, if you will only let Philip ~~be an architect~~."

"Pshaw! nonsense! I tell you he is not rich enough. Even supposing you could raise the money, he could not earn a penny for several years to come, at least."

"But, sir, I should be getting that which would enable me to earn a fortune in the end," said Philip eagerly.

"Fortune! Bless your heart, lad! what do you know of getting a fortune?" returned Mr. Harland disdainfully.

"Mr. Wilkinson has got one, sir," replied Philip, nothing daunted, "and he began without a farthing."

"Mr. Wilkinson is an old man, and has been at it all his life; to say nothing of his having a genius for that sort of thing. But you!" and Mr. Harland looked scornfully at Philip's boyish figure as he stood up in the firelight. "No, no; fortunes are not made so easily as you suppose. I

advise you to give up this wild-goose scheme, and settle down like a sensible fellow."

Wild-goose scheme! As Philip's vision of future greatness appeared to him, it was anything but wild. That beautiful idea of his, that had dwelt in his mind so long, and that would expand, if once it might see the light of day, into something more beautiful still! Wild-goose scheme, indeed! that might be said of many boyish follies, but not of his.

"Do not you think, sir," suggested Marian, "that we could contrive, by being very, very careful, to let Philip live at home, and take what time he wants to study in, and fit himself for his profession? If once he succeeded——"

"Pshaw! nonsense!" again exclaimed Mr. Harland, "there are the two little ones to educate and do for. How is their schooling to be paid for, I should like to know, if Philip is on our hands all that time, and the three hundred pounds out of your income besides? It is quite absurd."

"I can teach Carry and Richard myself for the present, at least," said Marian; "they would like it better than going to school."

"Oh yes, that we should!" cried the children eagerly, running to Marian, and beginning to hug and kiss her.

"But," said Mr. Harland, a little softened, "you are so young, child; you have hardly finished school yourself."

"That is true, sir," replied Marian; "but what I know, I can teach them; and I can explain their lessons to them, and hear Carry practise; and while they are so little, I do not think they will be much the losers."

"And I can teach Richard his Latin when I come home

at night," said Philip; "he is a capital little fellow at his books."

"Well, well!" returned Mr. Harland; "still your house-keeping expenses would eat you up. You have two servants; have not you?"

"Yes, sir; but I am sure we could do with only one," replied Marian. "I should help as much as I could, and Carry and Richard are good children to wait upon themselves. I am sure we could do with one; we should like to try, sir, for Philip's sake. We would do anything in the world for Philip."

"Oh yes! we would do anything in the world for Philip," was echoed by the little ones.

Mr. Harland did not answer all at once. He went on stroking his chin, and thinking very intently; but he was not thinking of Marian, or of Philip, or of Mr. Wilkinson, or the three hundred pounds, or the years of earning nothing. His thoughts had wandered to his own fireside. He saw his daughter Charlotte (Marian's age), his two little ones, and his great boys Fred and Robert,—would they have pushed together? Alas! there was no peace by that fireside, for an ugly demon called Strife had crawled in, and every night made one of the party. And there were bickerings, and heart-burnings, and sullen looks, and angry words, and all the unlovable tempers that can make home so wretched. And these it was, though Carry and Richard did not know it, that made the lines so deep on Mr. Harland's forehead and his face appear so stern. And as he looked at the little group before him, so happy, although they were orphans, and would have to struggle with the world, a feeling of something like envy stole into his mind. He felt

sure they would do well, young and unprotected as they were, and with only the slender income he was so fond of talking about. They were linked together with the golden chain of love; and, thus united, must carry everything before them. It was the old fable he remembered to have read when he was a lad, of the bundle of sticks, and how it could not be broken until some evil hand had separated the one from the other. Surely this would never be the case here!

At length Mr. Harland took his leave, promising to think over what Marian had said, at the same time he gave her no hope whatever of Philip's scheme being carried out. The great expenses, the earning nothing for so long a time, the narrow income, and the necessity for what he called beginning life in earnest, and to some purpose,—these were hinderances that Philip, sanguine as he was, could not meet; and when Mr. Harland was gone, he felt his heart sink within him.

Long after every one else had retired for the night, he sat up before the grate, from which every spark had disappeared, cherishing the ruins of his beloved project. Sometimes he thought he would do it in spite of everything and everybody. Yes, yes! other people had succeeded, and why should not he? He would be determined to do it. He would raise the sum required, he would live at home, he would work with all his might, and get on faster than any one had ever done before. He would mount, step by step, the ladder whose top rested on the battlements of his castle in the air, until he had not another step to climb. And, then, how glorious it would be! He should be as great a man as Mr. Wilkinson, and have his country-house, and

all the grand things that quite dazzled him to think of. Yes, yes! he would be an architect beyond all doubt or question.

But then, when Philip deigned to look from the height to which fancy and a sanguine disposition had led him, he saw a very different picture. He saw his sister Marian, good, gentle, and patient as she was, struggling with poverty and privation for his sake. He saw the little ones, Carry and Richard, foregoing advantages that he might have them instead. He knew he should hear nothing of their sacrifices,—they would be made so cheerfully and willingly. But it was too selfish! their income would be slenderer than ever, and he, the eldest and the strongest, would be making no addition to it. No, no! he could not do it! Not even the realizing of his fondest hopes could make amends for those years of privation. He would come down from his height, and, as Mr. Harland had said, provide for his own maintenance, and grapple with the world at once. He would take the vacant place in South Street. It would be very disagreeable, and Fred Harland would be sure to quarrel with him, and the young men to push him about. But then Marian and the little ones would be spared all pinching and contriving. The battle of life would be with him, not with them. He should go first and bear the brunt of it. Farewell to his dreams, his castle in the air, and his country-house! He would risk the chance of ever being able to obtain them. It was quite clear where the path of duty lay, and he would take no other.

The consequence of these reflections was, that Philip went to bed having made up his mind *not* to be an architect.

CHAPTER III.

"I HAVE quite given it up, Marian," said Philip, the next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, and the little ones had run to play in the nursery.

"Given up what, dear?" said Marian.

"Given up being an architect. I see clearly that it won't do. We are not rich enough, and I am not selfish enough to wish you to struggle on all those years for me."

"Oh, Philip! do not think of us—we would do anything and everything. Your success would be our success; we have but one interest."

"No, no, Marian! do not try to unsettle me; I have quite decided, and am going now to tell Mr. Harland. I will go into his warehouse in South Street. It is the right thing I am sure; I have been thinking of it all night. I shall keep the other scheme in sight, and perhaps get some one to give me a little instruction; but for the time I must earn something, Marian. I am at the head of the family, now poor papa is gone," added Philip, with a mournful pride.

Marian was not willing that he should give up his scheme all at once. But still Philip could see that she was greatly relieved, and that a load of anxiety was taken from her mind. Marian had spent a sleepless night as well as Philip. She had been thinking of difficulties that his sanguine temper had overlooked, and they were serious enough to make her tremble. Besides, she had another project in her head that

he was to know nothing about. There was small hope of its success, though it had been one of the things that had driven sleep from her pillow. She could but try it, and if it failed, Philip would be no worse off.

As for Philip, he seemed full as eager to get into the warehouse in South Street as he had been to be articled to Mr. Wilkinson. He put on his cloak, muffling himself up in it, for the cold was as intense as ever; brushed his hat, and set out, whistling, to hide his vexation, and make Marian believe he was perfectly happy.

When he reached Mr. Harland's great handsome house, he was shown into a room with a warm blazing fire that looked comfortable enough. A little girl, about Carry's age, was sitting on the floor, sobbing violently, while pieces of a puzzle lay scattered beside her.

Philip loved all children dearly, and was just the best person in the world to dry her tears, and make her happy again. But the little one was in a terrible passion, and would not answer any of his questions, but kept sobbing on as if her very heart would break. At length she began to say, "It is because nobody will help me."

"Help you do what? Put your puzzle together?"

"Yes; aunt gave it me—and I don't know how to do it—and they won't help me—and Charlotte slapped me, and told me I was a little plague!" and again began the sobs and the passion.

"Perhaps your sister was busy, and did not like to be teased," said Philip soothingly.

"No, she was not busy—she is never busy—only she is so cross and ill-tempered."

"Well, but perhaps I could put it together for

you," said Philip, taking up the pieces; "what is it all about?"

"It is the kings, and I never learned the kings, and I don't know anything about them," said the child, brightening up, however, at the prospect of being helped.

"The kings of England, you mean," said Philip, laughing; "but it happens that I know all about them—so let us begin. There—that man who looks so cross, and has the rod in his hand, comes first; that is William the Conqueror. You have heard of him, I dare say?"

"I said it in my lesson to Miss Fuller, but she never told me anything about him."

"Didn't she? Well, there are some pretty stories about him," continued Philip, who was fitting the pieces one into the other; "he had three little boys who were always quarrelling."

"Just as Fred and Robert do, I suppose," said the child quickly.

Philip looked puzzled, and thought he had best change the subject, and pass on to William Rufus, and his being shot in the forest.

"And did one of his brothers shoot him?" asked the child, who was getting very much interested.

"O dear, no! how can you think of anything so dreadful?" cried Philip.

"Only because Fred and Robert fight so, and call each other names, and Fred gave Robert a black eye the day before yesterday; and Robert knocked Fred down, and papa was so angry, and said he would lock them up, and keep them on bread and water, if they did not mind. Do you

ever fight with your brother?" added she, climbing on his knee, for she had quite forgotten her passion.

"Me! O dear, no! I never fight with any one."

"Don't you? and have you got any brothers and sisters as little as I am?"

"Yes; I have a little sister just as old as you are."

"O, please, tell me her name!"

"Her name is Caroline; but we call her Carry for short, and she is the dearest little sister in the world," said Philip, warmly.

"How I wish she might come and play with me! But do you show her puzzles and tell her stories?"

"Yes, when I have time; and make her little paper dolls, and set them dancing."

"O, how nice!" cried the child, clapping her hands; "I wish you were my brother instead of Fred. Fred never plays with us at all; he only scolds us and pushes us. I hate being pushed—don't you?"

Before Philip had time to reply, Fred Harland himself came into the room.

"Good morning, Philip—I thought it was you. Get along, you little bothering thing, and pick up your traps, and be off!"

This was addressed to his sister, and accompanied by a push and a frown.

"O, don't be cross with her," interposed Philip; "we have been learning the history of England together, you see."

"Much good may it do you! Come, off with you, little Miss Pert, and do as you are bid in a minute."

The child's face, that had been quite cheerful and pleasant

a few seconds ago, became sullen and disagreeable; and then followed some saucy speeches, met with rude angry words from her brother, and ending in a scuffle, in which she was fairly turned out of the room, and the door bolted upon her.

"There! we have got rid of her at last," said Fred, throwing himself into a lounging-chair. "I am sorry you have had to wait so long, Philip. The fact is, we have had a row this morning."

"A what?"

"A row. It is no new thing, either; we have them every day, more or less," continued Fred, carelessly; "but this was a very great row indeed, and papa must take a minute or two to get over it before he can see you."

"Has anything been the matter? I really do not know what you mean," said Philip, extremely puzzled.

"Why, how innocent you must be! You live on milk and rose-leaves, don't you? I forgot what very good people you were," said Fred, with a sneer.

Philip felt angry; but it was really not worth while. He disdained to quarrel with Fred Harland, so he merely looked very dignified, and made no reply.

"Well, now, I will tell you," continued Fred. "It was about Charlotte, and serve her right, too; she never will be up in time to give papa his breakfast;—how should she, when she sits up reading novels till one or two in the morning?—so papa blew her up famously; it was quite fun to hear him!"

"Fun! do you call that fun?" said Philip, with a look of disgust.

"Capital fun," said Fred, rubbing his hands; "and then

Lotte cried, and papa scolded ; and between them there was a first-rate row !”

Philip felt shocked beyond measure, and his face expressed it as plainly as words could have spoken.

“ Ah, I see,” continued Fred ; “ you think it very wicked to quarrel, don’t you ? You are such a *good* boy, and your sister is such a *good* girl. I dare say you never scold or pinch each other, or do any of those amiable little tricks.”

“ No, indeed, we do not,” replied Philip, indignantly ; “ we never quarrelled in our lives ; we do not know how.”

“ You should come here, and you would soon learn,” said Fred, bitterly ; “ it is squabble, squabble, squabble, from morning till night. You would think, instead of being brothers and sisters, we had only been shut up together to bite and devour each other, like the Kilkenny cats, if ever you heard that story.”

“ Well, but if you love each other, as sisters and brothers ought to do,” began Philip.

“ Ah, that’s where it is ! We do not love each other—at least, it seems as if we did not. We do not stick together, anyhow ; and one is out of tune, and the other out of temper, and Fanny and Willy are the greatest torments in life.”

“ If that was Fanny you just turned out of the room, I think she is a very nice child indeed, and might easily be managed with kindness,” said Philip.

“ Managed ! Much you know about it ! She is the most passionate, headstrong little creature that ever lived, and ready to tear your eyes out if she is provoked. She and Willy can never be together a minute without quarrelling.”

"Dear me! that is sad indeed!" said Philip, looking very much concerned.

"And as for Willy, he is the most aggravating little fellow in the world; there is nothing he will not do to vex you. I hate the sight of the child; he is as bad as Robert, though he is but half the age; and Charlotte is only fit to dress, and be a fine lady, and will not so much as lift a finger to do anything for you. I shall start off some of these days, and leave them all behind me," said Fred; and he got up, and walked to the window, with his hands in his pockets.

Philip was not sorry that a messenger came just then to summon him to Mr. Harland. It made him wretched to hear about these family quarrels; and he felt as if the very atmosphere around him was full of turmoil and unrest. His own peaceful home, Marian's loving face, and Carry's and Richard's childish caresses,—how dear they were to him at that moment! How he longed to find himself amongst them once more!

As he crossed the hall, he saw Charlotte coming out of the opposite door, her arms filled with a quantity of loose music. Her eyes were swelled with crying, and the music seemed too heavy for her, for she let some of it fall just before Fred, who was lounging in the passage. Fred laughed ill-naturedly, but never offered to assist her, while Philip began immediately to pick up the loose sheets.

"Before I would!" said Fred, shrugging his shoulders, and leaning with his back to the wall.

"Thank you, Philip—you are very kind, I am sure," said Charlotte, who seemed much touched by his good-nature.

"Let me carry them upstairs—they are a great deal too

heavy for you," said Philip, marching off with the music under his arm, and setting at naught all Fred's sneers and scoffs.

When he got to the landing, Charlotte opened the drawing-room door, and asked him to lay it on a chair.

"I am so much obliged to you, Philip," said she, the tears streaming down her cheeks; "I only wish my own brothers were as kind as you are."

Philip had not a minute to spare, for Mr. Harland was waiting to speak to him. But he did just drop a few words into Charlotte's ear,—he did just hint to her, as well as he could without giving offence, that among brothers and sisters there was no law like the law of love,—that a soft answer turns away wrath,—and that to do to others as we would they should do to us, was our Saviour's golden rule, and never failed to make people happy and beloved. He could not say more, lest Mr. Harland should be gone; but he spoke so pleasantly, and with so much feeling, that Charlotte listened attentively, and even promised to think it over. Perhaps, if she had kept her word,—if she had pondered this golden rule, and earnestly prayed for help to keep it,—better things might have happened. But the beginning of strife is aptly compared in the Bible to the letting out of water; and so it was that, only half an hour after, a peevish word, peevishly replied to, brought on an angry speech; and the angry speech, replied to in an irritating manner, brought on a quarrel; and the quarrel involved the whole house in a disturbance. Alas! how could the spirit of love and peace dwell in a family like this! and without its influence, there could be nothing good, nothing strong, nothing holy!

When Philip entered the breakfast-room, Mr. Harland was standing with his back to the fire, and his watch in his hand, as if he were reckoning every second that detained him from his business.

"Well, young man," said he coldly, "and pray what is your errand this morning?"

"I came, sir," replied Philip, "to say how much obliged I am for the kind offer you made me last night, and that I am afraid you thought me very foolish not to——"

"Boys of your age generally are foolish," interrupted Mr. Harland, looking at his watch. "Was this all you came to tell me?"

"No, sir. I came to say that if you would be kind enough to take me, you will not find any young man in the town more grateful or more willing to serve you than I shall be."

"That is the first rational word you have spoken since your poor father died!" cried Mr. Harland, shaking him heartily by the hand. "I am very glad to find that you have come to your senses. So you have slept away that wild-goose scheme of being an architect, have you?"

Philip's colour rushed to his cheeks, dyeing them like crimson.

"I have not entirely given it up," replied he; "but I think, that as it will cost so much, and prevent me from earning anything for so long, it would be selfish to carry it out just now. Your offer, sir, will enable me to do something for them at home, and that is my first duty."

Philip's heart overflowed with home affection, and he longed to pour it out. He longed to tell how cheerfully Marian would have aided him, would have toiled and striven,

and that no opposition of hers had made him give up his favourite project; how, to use his pet expression, they would all have pushed together. But after what he had just seen and heard, it would have been cruel to remind Mr. Harland of the love and happiness that his wealth had failed to purchase. Home, without these, is no home in its sweetest and most sacred sense; and so Philip thought, and he held his peace.

Mr. Harland was pleased with what he called Philip's good and wise decision, and he became quite cheerful and encouraging; he told him he might go with him to the warehouse that very morning, and be introduced to his new employment. He was to have a fixed salary, and this, though really very small, seemed great riches to Philip. He would give every farthing of it to Marian, only, perhaps, he might save out something to buy her a new cloak; the old one was getting very thin and shabby, and she had been naughty and obstinate about not having another. Philip laughed to think of these two ugly words applying to Marian, but it was really the truth: she would spend the money in purchasing a warm pelisse for Carry, and a winter coat for Richard. Self always came last with Marian; but Philip could be even with her now. He was glad, very glad, he had not persisted in trying to be an architect.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Philip was gone, Marian set herself to carry out the plan she had been secretly contriving. This was to take some of Philip's drawings to Mr. Wilkinson's house, to ask him to look at them, and to give her his advice. It was rather a daring expedition, and Marian's heart fluttered very strangely as she ran upstairs to prepare for her walk. She had never seen Mr. Wilkinson except in his carriage, or in his pew at church. He seemed to her a very great man, and his house, which was a mile from the town, was quite a mansion, and had its porter's lodge and its carriage-drive up to the door. Marian felt that it required some courage and resolution to go. Besides, Mr. Wilkinson might be out, or be engaged, or a hundred things; or, worst of all, he might think her impertinent to have come on such an errand. Still she would run the risk, for Philip's sake,—Philip being so very near her heart. She could not bear his beautiful project to slip through, and to have him plodding on, year after year, at an occupation she knew would be distasteful to him. His drawings, so she thought, were fine enough to show to any one; even Mr. Wilkinson must admit their talent. At all events, she would make the effort, and get his opinion upon them, come what might!

Marian put on her Sunday bonnet and the cloak that Philip said she was so obstinate about. It was very thin

and shabby, and not half warm enough ; but her heart was warm enough for anything, and she was too eager to serve Philip to care much for wind or weather.

But, O how cold it was ! There had been more snow in the night, and the men were busy with their spades shovelling it away. The faces of the people in the street looked very blue and pinched, and the milk-boy swung his arms with greater energy than ever. Everybody said it would snow again before the day was over, and so the clouds threatened, though they rolled back their edges a little, just to let a glimmer of sun peep through. Such a feeble glimmer it was ! as if the sun were a long way off, and the frost were close at hand, and more than a match for him.

Marian set off bravely ; but the wind searched every corner of her thin shabby cloak, and made her wrap it round her as tightly as she could. She walked fast—almost ran—to keep herself from freezing. But running was no easy matter, for out of the town the snow was very deep, and she had to pick her way as best she could, holding Philip's folio under her arm, and dreading most of all lest anything should happen to it.

A very disagreeable walk it was down that lane half filled with snow ; but by-and-by it became more disagreeable still, for the feeble glimmer of sun went in, and great flakes began to descend, one after the other. Marian quickened her pace, and tried to think it would not be much, as she had some distance yet to go. But, alas ! the clouds spread like a thick blanket over the sky, a mist blotted out the trees and hedges, and in a few moments the air was one moving mass of snow.

Marian's cloak and bonnet were soon as white as the face

of nature around her. Still she was resolved to go on: it would be disappointing to give it up. Philip would be sure to guess where she had been to, or rather she should be sure to tell him, for she never could keep a secret from Philip. And if she were to turn back, she should have nothing pleasant or encouraging to say to him. O, no! come what might, she would certainly go on.

But the snow-storm seemed determined to oppose her: it drove and beat against her with all its force. The wind was even worse than the snow, and the hail and sleet worse than either. It was a sharp battle, but Marian gained the victory; and as she struggled up to Mr. Wilkinson's gate, there came a rent in the clouds, and out burst a glimmer of sun, that shone on the few remaining snow-flakes which still lingered in the air.

The storm was over, and as Marian stood a few minutes to breathe, and to shake the snow from her cloak, she rejoiced to think that she had not been coward enough to turn back. But she felt very nervous as she reached the portico, and had her hand upon the knocker. No, she would not knock, she would ring; and then how her voice trembled as she asked if Mr. Wilkinson were at home? Yes, Mr. Wilkinson was at home, though he was engaged; the footman, who opened the door, did not know for how long; but he asked her to walk into the breakfast-room, where, he said, Miss Wilkinson would speak to her.

Lilla Wilkinson was Mr. Wilkinson's niece, and had only just left school. Marian had seen her once at church by the side of her uncle, but so muffled up in a veil that her features were hardly visible. She had yet to know how handsome Lilla was, with her blooming cheeks, her graceful

figure, and her rich dark hair braided smoothly over her forehead.

Lilla was a few years older than Marian ; but she had had no deep experience of life to give her that quiet, thoughtful look and matronly air. Life had been all sunshine at present, and Lilla was a happy, merry-hearted girl, with nothing in the wide world to give her a moment's uneasiness. She had been brought up by her uncle from her very cradle, and, now she had finished school, she was to live with him, and be, what he playfully called, his little housekeeper. But her housekeeping was tolerably easy work, for it consisted in driving out with her uncle, sitting at the head of his table, receiving his guests, and being as kind and affectionate to him as if she had been his own daughter.

On this snowy winter's morning, when all without was so dreary and comfortless, Lilla looked the picture of ease and enjoyment. She was sitting at a small stand placed in front of the fire, and before her stood an elegant work-basket, piled up with German wools of every imaginable shade. She was busy working a pair of slippers for her uncle ; and very pretty they would be, to judge from the skilful manner in which she had arranged her colours.

Lilla rose as Marian entered, and looked rather curiously, and yet with perfect good-nature, at the poor shabby cloak, still wet with the snow-storm ; the face so young, and yet so thoughtful, and the small hands, that trembled half with cold and half with nervousness.

"I have taken the liberty of calling to see if Mr. Wilkinson is at home," said Marian, advancing timidly into the room, "and if he would allow me to speak to him."

"Allow you ? O, of course he will !" interrupted Lilla ;

"he will be very happy indeed, only he is engaged just at this moment. Do come to the fire and warm yourself. What a terrible day to be out in! I hope you have not had far to walk?"

"Only from Linford," replied Marian, unable to help glancing round the room.

It was a charming room, so perfectly snug and cosy. There was no gaudy display of wealth, but everything was arranged to please the eye and gratify the taste for refinement. The pictures that adorned the walls were gems in point of art, as were the medallions that hung one on each side of the pier-glass. One of the windows opened into a conservatory, full of the most lovely flowers, and here and there flowers stood about the room in vases, giving a delicious fragrance to the air. It hardly seemed like winter here; and Marian felt for the first time how much, how very much, the wealth that Philip talked about had it in its power to effect.

"From Linford!" exclaimed Lilla; "why, that is a mile off, at least. What a walk you must have had! And you were caught in the snow-storm, were you not? I heard it pelting at the window, but never thought it possible any one could be out in it."

"I hoped it would not have come quite so soon," replied Marian. "It did threaten when I set off, only I was so anxious to see Mr. Wilkinson."

"Dear me! what can you want to say to my uncle?" cried Lilla, who was intensely inquisitive, and rather too much of a chatterbox. Then, seeing that Marian blushed, she blushed too at her own impertinence, and said kindly, "Here, let me take off your cloak, and

sit down in that easy-chair and rest; you must be very tired."

Marian was very tired, and she found it extremely comfortable to sit down in the easy-chair, and bask in the warmth of the fire, before which Lilla hung the cloak to dry.

"My uncle will be half an hour, I dare say," continued Lilla, taking up her slipper; "he is talking to some one in the study;—do you know my uncle?"

"Only by sight," replied Marian, hesitating. "I am afraid he will think I have taken a great liberty in coming, but a few words of advice from him would be invaluable to me just now."

"I am sure he will not think it a liberty, and I am glad you did come," said Lilla heartily. "My uncle is very clever, is he not?"

"O yes! very clever indeed," replied Marian, in a tone of veneration.

"There are not many men like him," continued Lilla, nodding her head confidentially; "everybody says he is a genius; and so he must have been to get on as he has done."

"Do geniuses always get on?" asked Marian timidly, and holding Philip's folio tight in her hand.

"What an odd question! I am sure I cannot tell," said Lilla, laughing. "My uncle has risen by his talent, and he is never ashamed of owning it. He was a poor boy once, and had to struggle with the world a long time before he could be an architect. He wanted to be an architect when he was no higher than the table."

"And how long had he to wait?" asked Marian eagerly.

"Oh, a great many years! He had an invalid mother to maintain, and all day he used to work in his loom, and at night he would sit up making designs with a piece of chalk on a board. His mother thought them so beautiful that one day he carried the board to a gentleman, who was as successful an architect as my uncle is now."

"O, do tell me about it!" cried Marian, more and more interested.

"My uncle was half ashamed when the footman let him in," continued Lilla, "he was so shabbily dressed, for most of his earnings went to buy little comforts for his mother. However he took courage, and was shown into a room hung round with such beautiful drawings, they made him forget everything else. While he was looking at them, the gentleman came in, and went straight up to the table where the board was lying. He began to exclaim at the beauty of the designs, not supposing for a moment that the shabbily-dressed youth had anything to do with them. He took no notice of him at all, and went on admiring the designs, and wondering who had done them, and how they came there; and then, as if recollecting himself, he laid down the board, and asked my uncle what his business was."

"O, how proud and happy your uncle must have felt!" cried Marian, her eyes kindling and her cheek glowing; for the story touched her more nearly than Lilla imagined.

"When the gentleman found out the drawings were done by my uncle, he shook him heartily by the hand, and told him that Nature had intended him for something more than working in a loom. He could see that she had

intended him for an architect, and he would give him every encouragement in his power."

Did Nature intend Philip for an architect? Would Mr. Wilkinson give him every encouragement in his power? were the questions Marian asked herself. She still held the folio containing his drawings in her hand, and as Lilla gossipped on, glad enough to have any one to talk to, Marian's thoughts were all of Philip. It would have been a relief to have poured out her heart to Lilla, if Lilla had not been quite so much of a chatterbox. But something she could not describe kept her from dropping a hint of the real purport of her visit. And it was well she refrained from doing so, for Lilla would instantly have overwhelmed her with questions. Philip's age, his height, his appearance, even to the colour of his hair, would have been matter of inquiry, and have served Lilla to talk about all the rest of the day. For it must be confessed that poor Lilla's heart was better than her head, which at present contained little else than a smattering of French verbs, patterns of knitting and crochet, and a jumble of dates and names without any ideas attached thereto.

Just at this moment a step was heard, and Mr. Wilkinson almost immediately entered the room. He was an elderly man, and stooped a little, as if the infirmities of age were beginning to press upon him; and his hair, which was long and curly, was as white as snow. To look in his face, you would see at once that he was no ordinary person; his eyes were so penetrating, his forehead so broad and open, and his features so strongly marked. There was plenty of character there, plenty of energy and resolution, and it had carried him triumphantly through life. He had been a

successful man, and now in his old age he could afford to repose upon his laurels; his mind strong and vigorous as ever, and nothing but the snowy hair and stooping figure to tell of his declining years.

"O uncle!" exclaimed Lilla, "do you know that this—this—this young lady has walked all the way from Linford to speak to you, and she was caught in the snow-storm and came in quite wet through! She wants to see you very particularly indeed," added she; for she was dying with curiosity to know why.

"Well, then, I hope you have done your best to make her comfortable," said Mr. Wilkinson kindly, and glancing at the cloak that still hung by the fire. "I think I have the pleasure of knowing Miss Woodford," added he, holding out his hand to Marian with a smile full of benevolence.

"I am afraid, sir, you will think it very impertinent of me to come," said she; "but I did so wish to ask your advice, and to show you these drawings;" and she brought out the folio.

Mr. Wilkinson looked grave, and his smile faded away. Marian did not know how many, many times the same request had been made to him. How hundreds of drawings had been brought to him by mothers who thought their sons prodigies of genius, and by sisters quite as affectionate as she was. He had grown weary of the task, and lately had shirked it altogether. It was unpleasant to say hard truths, and to disappoint so many goodly hopes, and yet he could not yield a particle of praise to by far the greater number of these aspirants after fame. So, while Marian's slender fingers were busy undoing the strings of her folio

(for what did she know of all this?) he looked on rather severely, and could hardly suppress a sigh of vexation.

"They are my brother Philip's designs," continued Marian, still busy with the strings; "he has an intense desire to become an architect, and we all think he has a genius for it."

"Then why does he not carry it out?" asked Mr. Wilkinson, who seemed in no hurry to examine the contents of the folio.

"Because we are orphans, sir, and not very rich," replied Marian, slightly blushing. "Philip has had the offer of a situation in Mr. Harland's warehouse, and he thinks it is his duty to accept it."

"And he was quite right," cried Mr. Wilkinson, greatly relieved; "he could not have taken a wiser step. Tell him that I said so."

Marian felt a sensation of grievous disappointment, and her heart sank within her. No, no; she could not go home again with nothing better to tell Philip than that!

"My brother is hardly willing to give up his scheme, sir," said she; "it has always been the desire of his heart, and he certainly has a talent for it. You would see that, sir, if you would condescend to look at his drawings."

Mr. Wilkinson's face grew grave again, and he drew back as if the little folio were a serpent, and as much to be avoided.

"Sisters are apt to be partial, Miss Woodford," said he, coldly. "Your brother has done a very sensible thing, and I advise you not to unsettle him."

"No, sir, I would not do that; but I know he has only given up his cherished scheme on our account, and I

cannot bear him to drudge all his life at a vocation he dislikes."

"But he will soon begin to like it, and to feel an interest in his employment. Of course you are sure to think well of his drawings, it is quite right and natural. But, my dear young lady, only remember the hundreds and thousands of brothers there are whom their sisters set up for geniuses, but whom the world soon knocks down into their right places."

"Well, sir, the only wish I have for my brother is that he may be in the right place, and not in the wrong," said Marian, quietly.

"And depend upon it he is in his right place at Mr. Harlow's—Hargrave's—what's the gentleman's name?"

"Harland, sir," replied Marian, smiling.

"Ah, yes, at Mr. Harland's warehouse. It is a good opening for him, and he is only too fortunate to have met with it."

"Will you not look at his drawings, sir?" asked Marian, in the same quiet, steady tone.

"Why, if you particularly wish it; but I am weary of saying the same thing over and over. I have had so many mothers and so many sisters come to me on the same errand, and it is hard to send them away disappointed;—I would really rather not see them."

"O uncle! when she has walked through the snow from Linford?" cried Lilla, reproachfully.

Marian blessed Lilla in her heart; for Mr. Wilkinson, being reminded of this, began to put on his spectacles. She lost not a moment in opening the folio and laying the drawings before him. How well they looked! She was

sure they did, even beside the drawings on the walls, even in the eyes of Mr. Wilkinson. Her heart beat with pride and satisfaction. She knew that Philip had the power—she knew that Nature had designed him for an architect.

Mr. Wilkinson, in the mean time, had taken up the drawings and carried them to the window, where he held them to the light and gave them a careful inspection; Marian's eyes rivetted upon him as if it were a matter of life and death. But he put them back into the folio without any remark, took off his spectacles, and planted himself in front of the fire.

No one spoke, and to poor Marian the suspense was cruel indeed.

At length Mr. Wilkinson turned to her and said, "I should still advise your brother by all means to remain where he is."

"At Mr. Harland's, sir?" faltered Marian, hardly able to keep back her tears. "Then you do not think that—that——"

"I think the drawings are clever, but he wants instruction; they are full of faults."

Marian knew nothing of this, and it had never occurred to her that Philip's drawings could have any faults.

"They are the last he has done, I suppose?" asked Mr. Wilkinson.

"Yes, sir, quite the last."

"Ah, well! let him go on at Mr. Harland's; he cannot do better. So you were caught in the snow-storm, were you?" said Mr. Wilkinson, abruptly turning the conversation and closing the folio.

Poor Marian! the tears would come, and no effort of

hers could prevent them. Her grand scheme was evidently a failure, and Philip would not be a whit the better for it. She had not minded struggling through the storm, for hope had led her on and pointed to something grand in the future. But now, alas! it would be weary work going back, having only elicited the information that Philip could not do better than remain at Mr. Harland's, and having seen his drawings laid aside as unworthy a remark. And this was all her consulting Mr. Wilkinson had effected! She rose to put on her cloak, as there was no excuse for making her visit any longer; but Mr. Wilkinson laid his hand upon it.

"No, no! do not go yet," said he kindly; "we cannot turn you out in the snow until you have had some luncheon; besides, I want to hear more about this Philip you are so fond of. Is he your only brother?"

To make Marian eloquent, you had only to set her off talking of her brothers and sister, and the subject made her eyes sparkle and her cheek glow with affection. It was a pretty picture she drew of their quiet peaceful home; how they lived entirely for each other, and the joy of one was the joy of all, and the sorrow of one threw a shadow over the rest. How happy they were, secure in each other's love, trusting each other so entirely, and believing in each other without fear or doubting. This was not said in so many words, but implied from the little instances of affection that Marian let slip in answer to Mr. Wilkinson's inquiries. Long before luncheon was over, he could see very clearly how it was, and understand too how Marian had come through the snow that bitter morning. He felt a strange interest in this family of orphans, dwelling together in

unity. His heart softened towards poor Philip, and he reproached himself for dismissing the drawings so quickly. He again opened the folio, and began to take a second survey, and to ask a great many questions, which Marian was only too happy to answer. Then he helped her on with her shabby cloak, and insisted on sending her home in the carriage. He even dropped a hint of paying them a visit. There was no end to his kindness, and it seemed to Marian as though he would do anything and everything but just the very thing she wanted him to do; namely, encourage Philip to be an architect.

CHAPTER V.

"I WISH you would be quiet, that I do!" exclaimed Charlotte Harland to her brothers Fred and Robert. "How is it possible for me to write while you are making such a noise?"

"I wonder you choose to be writing a letter just now, when tea is ready, and papa is coming in in a minute," said Robert, who was performing 'God save the Queen' on his flute, though not in the very best time or tune.

"It is not a letter, it is something that papa told me to copy. I forgot to do it yesterday, and he will be very angry indeed if I have not done it to-day."

"So much the worse for you, Miss Lotte! you cannot expect us to be mum just because you have been lazy, and not done what you ought to have done," cried

Fred, beginning to whistle an accompaniment to his brother's flute.

"How ill-natured you are!" whimpered Charlotte. "If it had been Philip, now, he would have offered to copy it for me himself."

"O yes, that he would!" rejoined Fanny, throwing down the doll she was dressing. "I love Philip; he is a great deal kinder than either Fred or Robert."

"Much you know about it; you saucy little minx!" said Fred, giving her a smart box on the ear. "You shall be sent to bed without your supper, if you do not take care."

"No, I shall not!" retorted Fanny stoutly. "I never am sent to bed unless I am naughty; and I shall tell papa you boxed my ears, and then perhaps you will get sent to bed instead."

"You had better hold your tongue, or I shall box them again," said Fred angrily.

"O, pray do not quarrel, whatever you do!" cried Charlotte, in a tone of distress. "I shall never get done to-night. Dear me, if I have not made a mistake! Do, some one, lend me a knife to scratch it out."

"Mine is upstairs, so you can't have that," said Robert, puffing away at his flute.

"And mine is a new one, and quite too good to be lent," said Fred, taking it out of his pocket, and beginning to open and shut it.

"O Fred, do let me have it a minute; it cannot hurt it. You may scratch the word out yourself if you like." And she pushed the paper towards him.

"No, indeed! I am not going to do anything of the kind," said Fred, scornfully.

"Well, then, do lend me the knife, there's a good boy."

"No, I will not!" said Fred, shutting it, and putting it into his pocket. "You would not lend me a pencil the other day when you had one in your hand, and now I will not lend you my knife. It's only tit for tat." And he began to whistle again.

"O, but Fred, I will lend you all the pencils I have in the world, if you will only let me have your knife!"

"Ah, but it is too late; I do not want your pencils now."

Charlotte heaved a sigh of vexation.

"If it had been Philip,"—she began.

"Ah, there it is! always Philip, Philip, Philip, in our teeth!" cried Fred; "you know how disagreeable it is, and that is just why you do it."

"Philip is much better than you are, either of you, or all of you put together!" cried Charlotte, foolishly and in anger.

"I deny that he is better than I am," said Robert, stopping his tune abruptly; "though I dare say he is better than Fred. He may easily be that," added he with a sneer.

"Indeed!" retorted Fred, bridling up, and turning fiercely round upon his brother. "I will pay you off for that, Master Robert." And he made as though he would have struck him.

Robert, who was a great coward, started hastily back, and in doing so gave the table a push, which upset the ink. This catastrophe threatened to be very serious, for not only the paper Charlotte was copying, but the table-cloth and her silk frock were plentifully besprinkled, to say nothing of the carpet, which came in for its share.

"Oh! what shall I do?" cried Charlotte, "you wicked boys! Only see what you have done! O my poor frock! and just look at the ink upon the carpet!"

"It serves you right," said Fred; "you should not have set us off quarrelling."

"I did not set you off quarrelling; you can quarrel quite fast enough without me," said Charlotte, in an aggravating tone.

"Come, give over, and get the ink done up before papa comes home," said Robert; "he will not give you a silk frock again in a hurry, Miss Lotte; and there will be a famous row about the carpet."

"Hark! I hear him coming. I will run and tell him," cried Fanny, starting off to the door.

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Fred, pulling her back; "you please to hold your tongue, and mind your own business." And he gave her a push that sent her spinning into a corner.

"I won't be pushed! and I will tell papa!" cried Fanny vehemently.

Mr. Harland was pulling off his great-coat in the hall. He was tired, and thoroughly out of spirits. He had gone away that morning leaving Charlotte in tears, and everything very uncomfortable.

It was hard, he thought, never to have any peace at home. His two elder sons, Fred and Robert, were fine young men, just starting in the world; his daughter Charlotte was a showy, handsome girl; and the little ones, Fanny and Willy, looked the picture of health and vigour. There was nothing apparently to make them unhappy. Poverty had never shown her gaunt face among them, and sickness

and bereavement were unknown. They had read in books of struggling with the world, but they did not know what it meant. Their path through life, as far as externals went, was smooth enough, and every comfort and convenience that wealth can give was theirs. Still there was no happiness within that little circle; nothing but strife, strife, strife,—one angry temper arrayed against another, and one aggravating speech calling forth another. There were occasional lulls in the tempest, occasional truces, but no union, no peace.

"What is the matter now?" said Mr. Harland, as he entered the drawing-room.

"Nothing, papa; only Robert has knocked the ink over," replied Charlotte.

"It is a good joke to say I did it!" cried Robert angrily. "Fred was going to hit me, and I only stepped out of his way."

"You should not have been so aggravating then," said Fred; "but it was all Charlotte's fault. She need not have brought in Philip, and set us by the ears."

"Silence!" cried Mr. Harland in a loud, harsh voice; "you ought to be ashamed of yourselves! I only wish you were like Philip; I should stand a chance of having a little comfort then."

"It was not our fault," cried Fred and Robert in a breath; "it was Charlotte who—who——"

"Did not I tell you to hold your tongues?" interrupted Mr. Harland; "one disgraceful scene a day is quite as much as I can bear."

His children were silenced; but it was a gloomy silence, worse even than angry words. Violent passions were brew-

ing in their hearts ; they were mutually exasperated, and vowed to pay each other off. And yet, what was it all about ?—The lending of a paltry knife !

Tea passed over heavily enough, for scarcely a word was spoken. Then Charlotte took up a book and began to read to herself ; the two little ones were sent to bed ; Robert fidgetted about the room, and Fred took himself off, as he had done for the last several evenings, nobody knew where.

Mr. Harland leaned his head upon his hand, and shut his eyes as if he were asleep ; but, in reality, he was picturing to himself a fireside group not very far off. It was a picture he would have been glad to see realized at home. He had felt its genial influence every time he had paid a visit to the orphans, and reminded them of their narrow income. Alas ! in spite of his wealth, he felt that he was far poorer than they were. His hair was getting grey, and in the distance old age looked cold and blank upon him. He would have liked to feel his children's affection warm at his heart, making him almost young again ;—he would have liked them to love him, and to cling to him as those orphans did to each other ;—but he had been a stern father, and had never made his children love him. He had been too arbitrary with them, and had kept them at too great a distance. And he was arbitrary now, and would have made them love each other whether they would or not. He forgot that affection is a delicate plant, and cannot bud and blossom in a day ; that it must be cherished tenderly, lest some chill blast kill it unawares ; and that it is the strongest and best when it has never experienced any rude shock, but grown up peacefully, and without disturbance. Mr. Harland had not fostered this delicate plant ;

so now, when he looked for it to bring forth kindly fruits, he found none.

But it would not do to dwell upon such painful thoughts as these, so he drew his chair to the fire, and addressed his daughter.

"Come, Charlotte, put away your book; you have had all the day to read in."

"O papa! I am just in the most interesting place—I cannot possibly lay it down till I have finished the story. What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to talk a little. What have you been about all day?"

"What a strange question, papa!" said Charlotte, her eyes still fixed upon her book, "I have not been about anything in particular."

"No, let Miss Lotte alone for that!" interposed Robert; "she never does anything but stand before the glass, or sit with her feet on the fender reading novels."

"You have no right to say so, you rude, disagreeable boy!" cried Charlotte, flushing with anger.

"Papa told you to put away your book," returned Robert, flushing with anger too.

"I shall not put away my book at *your* bidding," retorted Charlotte.

"It is useless to look for a moment's quiet in this house," said their father, bitterly; "there is never any respite from quarrelling. Put away your book, Charlotte,—I will be obeyed."

Charlotte looked angry, and flung her book on the table without speaking, while Robert laughed in derision, and began to hum a tune.

To attempt social enjoyment, under such circumstances as these, was absurd, and again silence reigned.

Charlotte took up her netting, and pulled at the silk so violently that she broke it; then throwing it aside, she took up her book, and was about to quit the room.

Her father called her back.

"What are you going to do now?" asked he.

"I am going to read upstairs, as I may not finish my story here."

"Sit down directly," said Mr. Harland sharply; "it is a hard case, indeed, when I come home at night, that you are never willing to amuse me, or to give me the least pleasure."

Charlotte muttered a few words, and then sat down, looking the very picture of ill-temper. Robert took up her book, and, with a malicious glance, settled himself in the easy-chair to read it.

"No, that you shall not!" cried Charlotte passionately, and trying to snatch it from him. "Papa, he ought not to do it! it is my book—I have been reading it all day."

"It is not your book any more than mine," retorted her brother, holding it out of her reach;—"it comes from the circulating library, and as you have had it all day, it is quite my turn to look at it."

"If I may not read it, you shall not! Papa, do make him give it up? he has no right to have it until I have done with it!" cried Charlotte, crimson with rage.

Mr. Harland looked from one to the other, with an expression of sorrow and vexation.

It was not so in the picture he had been thinking about; none of these angry passions were there, to mar and ruffle

its repose. He would have given a great deal to spend a single evening by his own fireside as tranquilly as Marian and Philip did by theirs ; but, alas ! this was not to be !

The affair of the book was settled by Mr. Harland taking it away, and declaring that neither of them should have it ; and a period of black looks and sulking succeeded. Whenever her father spoke, Charlotte answered him in monosyllables, and put on the air of a person excessively aggrieved, while Robert hardly condescended to reply at all.

But by-and-by, when Robert had a little recovered his temper, he wanted to practise on his flute again, and Charlotte immediately found out that it made her head ache, and another dispute arose. And Mr. Harland grew quite weary, and lost all patience, and began to scold ; and then came the black looks, and the sullen silence ; and so the evening wore away.

Mr. Harland might well look grave and stern, and the lines in his face might well be deep.

CHAPTER VI.

WE must now give an account of Fred, who had been absent the whole of the evening.

As soon as tea was over, he had slipped quietly from the room, and, making his way through the garden, had let himself out into the street. It was a bitter night; the frost was as hard as iron, and the wind had an edge so sharp, it made his teeth chatter with cold. But in spite of the cold he went on, slowly and with hesitating steps.

"I have a great mind not to go," said he to himself,—“a very great mind indeed,—I know Jem wants to lead me into mischief. But then, I need not go wrong unless I like,—anything is better than sitting squabbling there for ever and ever; and that is the order of the day, and the night too, unless we have company; and if we have company, everybody is so cross the day after, it is enough to make one run away. Heigh-ho!” and Fred heaved a sigh, and walked on quicker than before.

At this moment some one ran by him, seemingly in a terrible hurry. Fred caught a glimpse of him, and saw that it was Philip, his hands in his pockets, striding through the snow as if he were out on very important business. He turned into a shop filled with toys and pretty things, that looked bright and tempting in the gaslight. Fred wondered what he wanted there, and stood looking at him through the window.

He forgot that to-morrow was New Year's Day, and perhaps he did not know it was a high day with the orphans, and that they gave each other presents, and made it a kind of festival. If he could have peeped into their snug little room just then, he would have spied a very busy scene indeed: he would have seen Marian working, as if for her life, at a watch-guard for Philip. It was done all but an inch, and that inch must be finished before he came home; and he would wear it on New Year's morning, with the watch his poor father had given him. Of course Philip knew nothing about it, nor would he be allowed until it lay upon the breakfast-table, with a note, in Marian's handwriting, wishing him a happy new year, and many of them. Nor did Carry know anything of the wax doll, dressed so nicely, in the white frock and pink slip, that lay under lock and key safe in Marian's drawer. Nor did Richard dream of the pretty story-book, with coloured pictures and gilt edges, that she had in store for him.

Nor was Marian herself supposed to know anything, or to see anything, of the mysterious signs that had been going on for some days between Carry and Richard. The counting up of Saturday halfpence—the whispering—the “hush! hush!” whenever she came near them—the glimpse, to say nothing more, of a bright-coloured box, that looked as if it might be full of sugar-plums, but which was popped under the sofa to be out of her sight; and the new silver thimble, that had glittered once on Carry's finger, and then was pulled off in a terrible fright and slipped into her pocket. These were mysteries only to be cleared up on New Year's Day!

Philip walked about the shop, handling first one thing

and then another;—now setting a windmill twirling round and round, with a little man at the handle, that would have sent Carry into an ecstasy—now winding up the mouse that ran of its own accord, and now laughing heartily at the goat with a long beard that was trundling another goat in a wheelbarrow. But nothing beat the windmill in Philip's estimation; so the windmill was bought for Carry, and a round game, called "the siege of Sebastopol," for Richard. And for Marian? Oh, nothing there! Marian did not want toys; he must find something more substantial for her. By-and-by he should be able to afford her a new cloak; but as it was, poor fellow! his purse was very low, and he could only lay out as much as would buy a pair of warm gloves, lined and trimmed with fur. So he darted across the street to the hosier's opposite; and what a great deal there was to be done with choosing these gloves! They must be of the very best quality. Philip would be satisfied with nothing short of this. And they must be the right size—a young lady's size, as he repeated over and over, until the shopkeeper could not forbear a smile. And they must be stitched with silk, and of the newest and most fashionable make. Philip knew very little indeed about fashion; but he thought nothing could be too good or too stylish for Marian.

Then how happy he looked as he came out of the shop, and walked quickly down the street, the gloves and the siege of Sebastopol in his pocket, and the windmill hidden under his cloak. He would have something to do to get in home unperceived; but he knew that no one would ask him any questions, for each member of the family was allowed a mystery on New Year's Eve.

Fred had been watching all this, and he thought it very silly indeed. He knew the presents must be for the New Year; but it was an absurd custom in his opinion. No one would catch him throwing away his money on his brothers and sisters; they were plague enough without that. And as for the new year, they should, he supposed, squabble through it pretty much as they had done through the old one.

But there was no dallying in the teeth of this merciless frost, so he hurried along, and turned down first one street and then another, until at length he drew up under the light of a gas-lamp, where a young man, about his own age, was waiting for him.

"Why, how late you are!" cried he, coming forward and rubbing his hands. "I have been expecting you such a time! Has the old gentleman found you out and been making a noise?"

"I do not choose you to speak disrespectfully of my father, Jem," said Fred, haughtily.

"Well, now! I am sure I never did speak disrespectfully of him. He *is* old, and he *is* a gentleman; I can't say fairer than that anyhow."

Jem Franklin was evidently far beneath his companion in station. He was a vulgar-looking youth, with an air alternately bullying and cajoling, and a sort of low cunning about him that stamped him as a dangerous associate. He had served his apprenticeship in Mr. Harland's warehouse, where he had acquired an influence over Fred by flattering his self-love, listening to his complaints of home, inflaming his anger against his brothers and sisters, and being always ready to "back him out," as he expressed it.

Sad as this was, it would have been well for Fred if the evil effects of Jem's companionship had ended here. But no one can calculate the exact amount of mischief brought about by unworthy associates, and Jem soon carried his influence farther than even Fred had anticipated.

There happened just then to be a series of lectures delivered in the town by a Mr. Sparks, a political demagogue, or, as Jem declared, a first-rate orator, who made it his business to defend the rights of the poor and protect them from the oppression of the rich. This sounded very disinterested indeed; but, as might have been expected, Mr. Sparks had his own ends in view, and cared very little either for the poor or their rights. His chief object was to make himself popular; and in order to do it, he condescended to pander to the lower classes of society by exciting ill-feelings between them and their superiors. At present he had not made much way, though the hard winter and its attendant scarcity had been in his favour. Still he went on, sowing the seeds of discontent and mischief, and it remained to be seen what kind of harvest they would yield.

Fred had attended one of these lectures at Jem's instigation, and quite unknown to Mr. Harland. He had slipped out of the house, as he had done to-night, and returned when the lecture was over without his absence having been noticed. He was highly pleased with his adventure; the style of the thing was new to him, and Jem flattered his vanity by telling him he was the only gentleman courageous and high-minded enough to encourage Mr. Sparks in his patriotic labours. Then Mr. Sparks had a ready flow of language, and the fine words he used dazzled

Fred, because he could not clearly understand what they meant. On the present occasion he was to be introduced to Mr. Sparks at the close of the lecture, and they and a chosen few were to sup together at Jem's lodgings. Fred knew he should be very late, and his father would have to sit up for him. There was sure to be a famous hubbub; but it did not signify much; there were hubbubs every day, and one more or less was no matter. So he put his arm resolutely within Jem's, and they marched off together to the lecture-room, where the orator was even now holding forth.

He was holding forth with great violence, and thumping the table to give his oration more effect. The drift of the matter was just the same as when Fred heard him before—that rich people were very bad and poor people very good—that society was altogether on a wrong footing, and would be until Mr. Sparks could get into Parliament to set it right.

“And he would get into Parliament to-morrow if he had not so many enemies,—great men always have enemies;” said Jem to Fred, when the lecture was over, and they were waiting to carry Mr. Sparks home to supper.

“But that is a great shame!” cried Fred indignantly.

“It is a shame; but I'll tell you the reason of it. Mr. Sparks is first-rate, and if he were to get into Parliament, he would drive them all before him. So you see the best thing they can do is to keep him out; but it won't answer long; such a man as that must come to the top in the end, and then—why I would not be in their shoes, that is all!”

“No more would I,” said Fred; though really the event did not seem to him at all likely to happen.

And now appeared Mr. Sparks himself, looking very big and self-important, and his face flushed with the excitement of his lecture. He was a coarse, unpleasant-looking man, with an awkward figure, and familiar ill-bred manners. He evidently thought a great deal of himself, and when Jem introduced Mr. Frederic Harland, he merely acknowledged his existence by a careless nod, without even the civility of raising his hat.

Fred thought a great deal of himself too, and was highly displeased at this uncourteous reception. Perhaps his countenance expressed what he felt, for the orator all at once changed his style of behaviour; he began a flourish of compliments, and ended by offering the young Briton, as he called him, his hand in token of fellowship.

It was a great clammy hand, that did not grasp its neighbour after the true English fashion, but gave a loose uncertain clasp, and then dropped. It was an unpleasant hand to touch, and so Fred thought, and he made an awkward reply to Mr. Sparks's flourish of words, and fell back a little.

Mr. Sparks and his two friends then walked away from the lecture-room, the orator talking all the time very loudly and largely, and bragging about his being a champion of Liberty, and ready any moment to die in her defence.

As far as Fred was concerned, he did not reel inclined to die in any one's defence; and as he picked his way through the snow, he wondered whether Mr. Sparks were really the great man he pretended to be or not. His faith in him was hardly so sound as he could wish.

At length they reached Jem's lodgings—for Jem, though he had a home, chose to live in lodgings, in order to enjoy what he called his liberty. As Fred ascended the dirty

staircase, he could not help feeling surprised that no better host was to be found for so great a man as Mr. Sparks. He was still more surprised when he saw the guests who soon after came clattering up the stairs. They were a set of ill-looking men, slovenly and dissipated in their appearance, as if idleness, not poverty, had clothed them in rags. Fred was alarmed at finding himself in such bad company, and even thought of making his escape.

"I cannot possibly stay," whispered he to Jem, drawing him aside; "you never told me what a set of ragamuffins would be here."

"Ragamuffins!" returned Jem, speaking, however, under his breath. "Sparks would tell you they are the very sinews of the British nation. Surely you are not going to despise them because they are poor."

"But they look to me more like rogues than poor people," said Fred. "Besides, really I am not used to sit down to table with such fellows as these."

"You forget who it is that has ground them to powder," said Jem, who had learned his lesson beforehand. "These are the very men you are going to set free from oppression. How can you do it if you shrink back from your own flesh and blood?"

"I wish my own flesh and blood were a little cleaner and more presentable," said Fred, shrugging his shoulders.

"Poor fellows, they have not been brought up so daintily as you have; but there are fine spirits among them for all that. You should hear Sparks address them; it will rouse your enthusiasm. See, there he is, getting up the steam."

But before the steam was got up, another game had to

be played. Mr. Sparks, with an air of solemnity, walked across the room to Fred, and took him by the hand. He then introduced him by name to the company, and went on to say that Mr. Frederic Harland was a gentleman by birth, but a hero by nature, and had magnanimously resolved to cast in his lot with theirs; and he concluded his speech by proposing three cheers, to hail the auspicious event of his first appearance among them. No sooner said than done. The ill-looking fellows flung their caps to the ceiling, and set up a shout of satisfaction.

"Here's to Mr. Frederic Harland!" was the cry, and Mr. Sparks himself joined in it with great noise and enthusiasm.

Fred's pulse beat a little quicker. He liked being a hero, and felt wonderfully reconciled to his new associates. And he felt more reconciled still, when Mr. Sparks proceeded to describe him as one of the pillars in the temple of Liberty, which was going to be built up. How no ties of kindred were to stand in his way, and that, unappreciated by his family and friends, he was to find refuge in the bosom of the people,—the great, the glorious people,—whose voice was said of old to be the voice of God! And here came a tremendous thump on the table to give effect to his words. Long before the orator's speech was ended, Fred was giddy with his new exaltation. His imagination was excited. He looked round the little dirty room, and it seemed to him a hall of assembly—on the few ill-looking fellows who had conducted him to this fictitious height, and they seemed almost a nation. He did not mind eating salt with them, for they stood in a new light. A glorious career was opening up before him; he was raised above all the bickerings and heart-burn-

ings of home. He had found out his vocation,—it was to be a hero!

After supper—during which Mr. Sparks indulged in rather potent libations, and pressed every one else to do the same,—after supper, the game went on with greater spirit still. Fred made a speech that was received with tremendous applause. He was flattered on all sides,—he was a sort of demi-god!

Fred liked his new position amazingly, and gave ear to all Mr. Sparks's stirring speeches about the tyranny of his home, and how jealousy of his superior talents was at the bottom of it. He did not stay to wonder how it was that Mr. Sparks should have the key to his domestic jars and discomforts. He was too excited for sober reflection. Time flew like magic, and it was not until the clock struck twelve that he remembered how his absence must long ago have been noticed.

He got up in a hurry; he must go home directly, and from a hero sink into an oppressed mortal. He must encounter his father's stern face, and Robert's malicious speeches. His brothers and sisters would rejoice over him if he got into a scrape; not one would stand by him, from the eldest to the youngest.

But Mr. Sparks had no intention of letting him off so easily. He must first be bound to secrecy. This was an idea that had not occurred to Fred, and it gave the matter a more serious turn. He promised to keep his own counsel, unless he were very much pressed; but that would not do.

Sparks, for reasons of his own, declared that it must be secrecy—absolute, inviolable secrecy. He must take an

oath. Fred felt reluctant, but Mr. Sparks was inflexible, and he had no alternative. And then, as a gentleman, he must give a little drink-money; and his health was drunk over again, and with the same enthusiastic cheering. It was long past midnight before he could get away, and then he walked home in a very excited state, and quite ready to defend the rights of the people, even to the last drop of his blood.

As he walked along, he heard the bells ringing the old year out and the new year in.

CHAPTER VII.

MARIAN did not intend to say a word about her visit to Mr. Wilkinson, because so little good had come of it. But it was very difficult to keep the matter secret from Philip, especially as Carry and Richard had told him, the minute he got home to dinner, that she had been out in the snow, and had come back again in a carriage. Then, as a natural consequence, the whole story came out, only that Marian made the best of it, and glossed over Mr. Wilkinson's treatment of the drawings. She dwelt, instead, upon his kindness, his keeping her to luncheon, and his promising to call. Still Philip was not quite satisfied.

"But what did he say to the drawings, Marian?" repeated he, for the third or fourth time.

"Why, my dear, he praised them, and praised you very much indeed for going to Mr. Harland's, and said I was to

tell you so. He is such a good, kind old man—and his hair is——”

“I don’t want to hear about his hair just now,” said Philip, hastily; “did you show him the drawings?”

“Yes, dear; I told you that I did,—I went on purpose.”

“Ah, Marian! it was just like you! and yet, it was very naughty to go through the snow this dreadful morning,” said Philip, affectionately; “I would not have allowed it if I had been at home.”

“But you see I waited until you were safe out of the way,” said Marian, laughing.

“Well, but do tell me what he said, every word, and how he looked when he opened the folio. I want to know every single syllable.”

“He did not say much. He has a great many drawings shown to him by different people. I dare say he is quite tired of looking at them.”

“Has he, though?” said Philip, his countenance falling in a minute; “but, Marian, he must have said something, and you have not told me anything.”

“He said the drawings were clever,” said Marian, evasively; “and then you know he promised to call, and that I think was very good of him.”

“But did he encourage me to go on?” persisted Philip, who thought nothing but this was of any good at all.

“Why he said, as I told you, that you were very right and wise to make sure of the place in South Street. He said it would be expensive to be an architect, and a long time before any profit came of it. We knew that before,” added Marian, gently, for she saw how her words grated

upon Philip; "but still, you can talk it over with him when he comes."

"Yes, I can," said Philip, with a sigh; "but, Marian, the long and the short of it is, that he did *not* encourage me to go on. You need not mind denying it—I see it in your face."

Poor Marian was driven into a corner.

"Well, dear," said she, gently, "you will know more about it when you have seen him, and he has looked at the rest of your drawings. He certainly takes a great interest in you, and, for my part, I do not despair of seeing you an architect yet."

"But I do, though," said Philip, sadly; and he ate his dinner in silence. He soon, however, rallied his spirits, for it would have been ungrateful of him not to remember what pains and trouble Marian had taken, and what a delicate task she had imposed on herself.

"It is, perhaps, as well as it is—yes, better to know the worst," said he, cheerfully; "I can go on with my drawing in the evenings—can't I, Marian?—just the same as ever."

"Yes, and I can read to you the while. I had such a pretty book lent me this morning, but I would not open it till night, because we can read it together."

"When we have played at dominoes—you will let us have a game at dominoes first?" said Carry, climbing on Marian's knee.

"O yes—the dominoes first,—only you beat us so, you little puss!" said Philip, disordering the pretty black curls without any mercy.

"I should like to hear the book first," said Richard, "only I will play at dominoes, just to please Carry."

"You forget how busy we are going to be, and that to-morrow is New Year's Day," whispered Marian to Carry.

"O yes!" whispered Carry to Marian, "and I have to write his name on the paint-box. Do, please, mend me a pen,—don't you wish he would go?"

This was said quite loud enough for Philip to hear, but he did not seem at all offended at it. He only laughed heartily, and his eyes twinkled, as though it were a capital joke for any one there to wish him gone. But they did wish him gone, that was evident; for Marian had the air of wanting to go on with something he was not to see, and Carry made as though she were being dreadfully hindered. Even Richard was a little excited, and his cheeks looked almost as rosy as Carry's. He had saved up his halfpence to buy a drawing-board for Philip, and it was not come, and he wanted to run to the stationer's to see how it was.

And when Philip was really gone, there was such a scramble—such mending of pens for Carry to write with—such scratching out of mistakes, for her giddy little head never could remember how to put the letters in their right places—such harassing after *the* drawing-board, until the stationer might have thought there was but that one drawing-board in the world—such worrying of Sally for paper and string—such running up and down stairs—such flurrying and excitement—nothing could be like it!

But at last all was done, and all was quiet. Philip came home and had his tea, being so absent all the while that he put salt, instead of sugar, into his cup, and strewed sugar, instead of salt, on his muffin. His mind was entirely in the toy-shop, whither he soon after betook himself, saying something about having to do an errand, though really he

need not have taken the trouble, for every one knew what he was gone for.

And then, when he came back, so cold, and yet so merry, getting almost into the fire to warm himself, and as full of fun as he could be,—then, out came the dominoes, and a glorious game it was! Carry won as usual, and Philip pretended that she cheated, and wanted to run away with her dominoes; and Carry scampered round the room, Philip after her, and took refuge under the table, and between them they nearly turned it over. And then Philip caught her, and there was such scuffling and screaming, that old Sally would have been in to see what was the matter, only such disturbances happened too often to cause her any alarm. Master Philip *was such a one* with children!

At length Carry was tired of play; and Richard was seen bringing out the book, and trying to peep into it. So the book came next, and Philip settled himself to his drawing. Carry began to stitch—or, as Marian more expressively termed it, to bodge—at a doll's pinafore, while Richard sat down to paint a red house, with a great many windows and bright green shutters.

The book was a very pretty book indeed, easy enough for Carry and Richard to understand; and whenever they were puzzled, Marian was always ready to explain, and never minded how often she was interrupted; and Philip chimed in with some funny speech that set them off laughing. So the book was quite as pleasant as the game at dominoes.

And then came the children's bed-time, and they had their supper, sitting before the fire chattering away, as Philip said, like a pair of magpies. And when they had finished their supper, Marian took them upstairs to the

nursery, and before they went to bed, she said a few simple words to them about the old year that was going, and the new year that was coming, and how good God had been to them, and how they must try to love Him, and how He had loved them, and had made them lambs in the fold of the good Shepherd. And then she read a few verses out of the Bible, and heard them say their prayer and their hymn; and when this was done, she kissed them and bade them good-night, and went down stairs again to Philip.

It was New Year's Eve, and neither Marian nor Philip felt inclined to work any more that night. So the book and the drawing were put away, and they drew their chairs to the fire, and began to talk.

They talked about their father, who, on the last year's eve, had been sitting with them, and whose vacant place brought a pang of affectionate regret. It was painful to think of the separation that was to last so long, and of the loss which was to them so irreparable. No one could fill a father's place, or give them his strong protection. But Marian and Philip remembered there was One who has called himself "the Father of the fatherless;" and to Him they had both humbly committed themselves, and chosen Him to be the "Guide of their youth, and their portion for ever!"

But Philip could not bear to see the tears that gathered in Marian's eyes; and he began to speak cheerfully of the future, the happiness of living together another year, and how, so long as they were not separated, it did not matter what befell them. And then he talked about Mr. Wilkinson, and built a great castle in the air on the hope of his coming to see them. He made Marian tell the story of her visit

over again, and seemed never weary of cross-questioning her on the subject. And he wondered what day Mr. Wilkinson would call, and whether anything would come of it.

As they talked on, the bells began to ring, and told them that the old year was very near his end. There was something solemn in the sound, and Philip and Marian sat listening in silence.

Twelve o'clock struck,—he is gone, the poor old year! Lay him softly in his grave, for many pleasant memories are with him,—of happy moments never to return, and of friends who, like him, are gone to rest!

But hark to the merry peal that bursts from every steeple! It is the welcome to the New Year's morning!

CHAPTER VIII.

"DEAR me! if those are not the bells, ringing the old year out and the new year in!" exclaimed Mr. Harland, looking at his watch.

He had been pacing up and down the drawing-room for some time in great irritation, hoping and expecting every moment that Fred would return. All the family had retired to rest except himself, and Robert, who was sitting up, as he said, to keep his father company, but in reality, to drop as many mischievous words as he could about Fred, and to make the crime of his staying out at night appear as black as possible.

He was particularly anxious to make as wide a breach as he could between his father and Fred, because Fred was the eldest son, and would be of age next month, and was then to be taken into the firm. Robert felt as if he could hardly bear his brother's advancement; and Fred made the matter worse by his foolish and boastful speeches. Robert was to have a share in the business too, by-and-by, for it was a large concern, and there was ample scope for both; but if Fred were out of the way, Robert would be first and foremost; and that was what he coveted. So he never lost an opportunity of injuring Fred in his father's esteem; and his staying out to-night helped him on famously, and he made the very most of it. Just now, Mr. Harland was in an excited state, and it was a good time for blowing up the spark to a flame.

He began by dropping a few mysterious hints about Fred having gone wrong for a long time past. *He* knew, though his father did not. But it must come out some day, and he was not at all surprised for his part.

"Then why did you not tell me?" said Mr. Harland, turning angrily upon him.

"Because, sir, it is not pleasant to be a tell-tale," said Robert, settling himself with his feet on the fender. "People always turn round upon you, as if you were in fault, though really——"

"Though really what? now do speak out if you please." And Mr. Harland drew up in his walk, and looked steadily at Robert.

"O, pray do not ask me; I should be sorry to vex you," said Robert artfully. "Be satisfied, sir, that you have one son at least who respects and—and who loves his father."

These last words were pronounced in a hesitating manner; but, be that as it might, they had a strange charm for Mr. Harland. To be loved by his children was what, in his heart of hearts, he was pining after, and he said kindly, "Come, my boy, speak up and let me know what you mean; there is nothing I hate like a mystery."

"Well, then, sir, Fred has got into bad habits lately," said Robert, putting on an air of brotherly concern; "he and Jem are so thick together, and Jem is anything but a suitable companion. You have warned us against him many times, and for my part I cannot find any pleasure in his society."

"I should think not, indeed!" returned Mr. Harland. "Jem is an ill-conditioned fellow, and it was a great mistake ever to take him."

"For Fred's sake it was a pity you ever did. He has led that foolish boy into all sorts of mischief. They are always playing cards together in some hole or corner, and Fred has lost no end of money."

"Has he?" exclaimed Mr. Harland, much surprised. "Why did not you tell me this before?"

"Because it is an ill office to spy out my brother's faults. But I know for certain that Fred is head over ears in debt, and Jem makes a famous handle of his owing him money."

Mr. Harland took a few turns in silence, and Robert congratulated himself on the effect this piece of intelligence was likely to produce. But he was a little disappointed when his father suddenly exclaimed,—

"Fred is a great simpleton! but I am glad you have told me. I will talk it over with him, and pay his debts *this once*," and he laid a stress on the last two words. "I shall

tell him it is the first and last time, and perhaps it will be a lesson to him for the future."

Robert had not calculated upon this, but he had another artifice in reserve.

"Ah, sir! he has reckoned upon your paying his debts long ago," said he; "he boasts that he can persuade you into anything, and take money out of your pocket whenever he likes."

"What unpardonable insolence!" cried Mr. Harland, reddening with anger. "Did he say persuade *me* into anything?"

"Yes, sir, those were his very words in the warehouse, the other day, before them all."

"And did he say that he could take money out of *my* pocket whenever he pleased, before them all?" continued Mr. Harland indignantly, and striding up and down the room.

"Indeed he did. I am very sorry to repeat it, but really some stop ought to be put to Fred's boasting."

"So I think; and not a single farthing shall he have of me!" cried Mr. Harland, touched in his most sensitive part—his pride. "No, not a single farthing! I could forgive his getting into debt—I could forgive his staying out at night, for I have been young myself—but to boast of persuading *me* into anything, of taking money out of *my* pocket!" And Mr. Harland walked about the room chafing at the insult.

Now Fred *was* in the habit of playing at cards, and *was* in debt to Jem, and he had been silly enough to make this boast; but it was said in a low tone to Jem, and not intended for any one else to hear, still less for his brother

to repeat. It is true he had reckoned too freely on his father's generosity, but Robert had grossly exaggerated the fact, and in his mouth it was intolerable.

Robert ended his night's work by raising a still more violent storm of indignation in Mr. Harland's mind. He dropped a hint about the workmen, and insinuated that Fred and Jem were brewing mischief among them. He strongly suspected Fred was out on that errand to-night, though where he was gone to he could not undertake to say.

All this time the bells kept on ringing in honour of the New Year's morning. It had come in sharp and frosty enough; the stars were twinkling in the sky and the moonbeams looked dazzling on the snow. The streets were full of people hurrying home from social meetings where they had been to sit the old year out, or from religious meetings where they had been to usher the new year in with prayer. The town had not been to rest as usual, and lights were glimmering from the windows, and people were wishing each other a happy new year.

The new year had a pleasant word to say to every one, for he was young and hopeful, and life lay all before him. The scroll of fate in his hand was yet unrolled, and nobody knew how well or how happily he might not turn out.

But now there was a step on the garden-walk, and a ring at the front-door bell. Robert went to open the door, for he knew it must be Fred, and it would give him an opportunity of saying something spiteful, and after that, he would take himself off to bed, and leave Fred and his father to quarrel it out.

"A pretty mess you have made of it now!" said he, as

Fred came in. "Here's my father in such a way! he will never forgive you as long as he lives."

"Never is a long time," said Fred, as he took off his cloak, and proceeded to hang it up in the hall.

"And pray where have you been to, and what have you been about? No good, I suppose; we all know that!"

"You will know nothing from me," said Fred, taking up a candlestick; "so now just take my advice, and mind your own business."

"Rude as a bear! but that is no new thing!" said Robert. "Some folks never know how to behave themselves, or how to give a civil answer. But you cannot go to bed without seeing your father, and he will teach you what it is to stay out till this time of morning."

"And I will teach you what it is to provoke me!" cried Fred, turning fiercely round upon his brother.

"Will you, indeed?" said Robert, stepping behind the stove, and speaking over it. "I suppose you have been out with Jem, as your father particularly wishes you to cultivate his acquaintance."

"I'll tell you what, Robert," said Fred, "I do not want to quarrel with you on New Year's morning, but you are enough to aggravate a saint! Now go to bed—good night, and do not say another word."

"I shall say as many words as I like," returned Robert, still behind the stove; "my father is quite tired out with your pranks. He and you will not pull together long, depend upon that."

"We shall pull together as long as I choose we should," said Fred haughtily.

"Indeed! but the rope is broken to-night, and you will

see how you get on. Good night, and a happy new year to you!" and Robert, with a sneer, took up his candle and departed.

Fred's temper was ruffled. He meant to be grand and heroic, and keep his secret as bravely as the Spartan youth did the fox under his gown, even if he should die for it. He had not forgotten that he was a hero, and had to defend the rights of the people. Mr. Sparks's oration, and the cheers of the multitude, as he called the handful of ill-looking men, were still fresh in his ears. He had been into a new world, and now he had to come back into the old one; and he found it, as he had left it, a world of strife and vexation. The very expression of his countenance was altered. A moment ago he had been proud and happy, now he felt care-worn and depressed; that constant jarring, like the dropping of water, was enough to wear away a stone.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Harland, as Fred ascended the stairs, "what is the meaning of this?"

Mr. Harland was standing at the drawing-room door, and looking so stern and cold that Fred felt rather taken by surprise. The old arbitrary spirit and the distance between them seemed just then greater than ever. With all the enthusiasm of his new vocation, and his popularity fresh upon him, Fred quailed before his father's keen angry glance, and the harsh tones of his voice. The meaning of it? It puzzled him to reply, and Mr. Harland mistook his silence for rebellion.

"Because I won't allow it! And I insist on knowing where you have been to!" said he, with the air of an absolute monarch.

"I cannot tell you, sir, where I have been to," replied Fred, feeling a little mortified that he was not at liberty to repeat all the grand things that had just been said of him and to him.

"Cannot!—will not, you mean; but I insist upon knowing. Mind, I insist. Take care what you are about."

It was the fable of the sun and the wind, and Fred only drew his cloak of secrecy closer round him. He would not tell—nobody should make him.

"So you do not choose to tell!" cried Mr. Harland passionately, and a red flush burning in his cheek like fire. "You do not choose; but I will make you!"

"You cannot do that—no one can make me tell against my will," said Fred, folding his arms, and looking his father steadily in the face.

"Yes, I can—I can turn you out—I can cut you off without a shilling!" cried Mr. Harland, violently irritated, and Robert's poisonous words still rankling in his mind.

"I can do without your money quite as well as with it," said Fred coolly, "there are plenty of ways open to me in the world. I am not a child now, to be in leading-strings."

"Child, indeed! Heaven only knows what I have to suffer with my children!" exclaimed Mr. Harland in a tone of anguish; "they are bringing my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Fred was softened. "I cannot tell you, sir, or I would in a moment," said he; "I have promised, and a promise is sacred—you know it is."

"I know nothing of the sort," returned Mr. Harland impatiently; "you had no right to promise. You have got

bad companions, Fred, and in the end you will come to ruin—mark my words—you will come to ruin!”

“But I am quite innocent in this case,” said Fred, with a complacent smile, for he thought in his own mind he should come to anything but ruin.

“Then tell me where you have been to?”

“I have promised to keep it a secret.”

“But I command you to tell me!”

Fred shook his head.

“I insist upon knowing!”

“It is quite impossible.”

“Then go!—I have nothing more to say to you! Do you hear me?—go!”

“Do not send me away in anger,” said Fred earnestly, —“it is the New Year’s morning, father—those are the bells ringing it in. I have done nothing to deserve reproach,—only have confidence in me, and all shall be cleared up in the end.”

“Do not talk of confidence, Fred,—when have you tried to win my confidence? And what do I care for the New Year’s morning? all years are alike to me! O children! children!”

Fred went up to him, and tried to take his hand; but Mr. Harland repulsed him. He had not forgotten what Robert had just been saying, and the new offence inflamed the old one. And then Fred grew angry, and said his father was unjust; and his father retorted; and the strife grew like a mighty river, and bore down all before it.

And when at last they parted, and retired, it was not to rest,—it was to chafe and fret, and to meditate harsh and bitter things the one against the other!

And then to pretend to be astonished when the children cried out, "Oh! Oh! Oh!" at the pitch of their voices, and pounced upon them like wild things. And then to wonder, in such a droll way, what there could be for him? or who there was to wish *him* a happy new year? And who could have worked *him* a watch-guard? or given him a paint-box and a drawing-board? Of course, nobody there could tell him anything about it!

He could not imagine, for his part, where they came from! It was a great mistake. What a thing it was, to be sure, that other people's presents should have come to him! And he put on such a puzzled air, that Carry and Richard danced about for glee.

But perhaps the handwriting would tell him. There was something in that—he thought he had seen it before,—where could it be? When he was a boy at school there was a Peter Perkins who wrote a little like it. Poor Peter! he remembered him quite well. But Peter could not have worked a watch-guard,—or, if he had, it was very extraordinary!

How the children laughed to be sure! Carry laughed till the tears streamed down her cheeks; and Marian tried three times to pour out the tea, but could not hold the teapot.

"O, you stupid boy!" cried Carry, climbing on his knee, and butting at him with her little curly head; "O you stupid boy! don't you know that Marian worked you the watch-guard? and that I gave you the paint-box? and that Richard gave you the drawing-board?—that it is *our* writing, and *we* did it?" and Carry proceeded to kiss him with her usual vehemence.

"You did it, did you? Well, then, there, and there, and there!"—and he kissed her again and again;—"and for every kiss may you have a happy new year! So you did it, Miss Carry, and Master Richard, and Miss Marian? Well, that is better than Peter Perkins; and I shall wear my watch-guard in honour of the day. Dear Marian," added he, changing his tone of drollery into one of tenderness and affection, "dear Marian, how many happy years have you not made for us already! I can only wish you as much happiness as you deserve, and then you will have enough."

It was very beautiful, that look of affection that passed between Marian and her brother; and it was the surest pledge that could be given of the many happy years that were to come!

And then Marian had to try on her new gloves, and to thank Philip for them, and to say how warm and comfortable they were, and just the very things she wanted. And Richard had to look at his picture-book, and to open the siege of Sebastopol. And Carry had to run up and down the room to set her windmill in motion. That windmill was the happiest idea of all. The little man threw her into a rapture. The only thing was, she would make him work so hard, and grind away until his arms dropped off. Every one could see clearly what the end of the little man would be!

Breakfast could hardly be thought of in the midst of these interruptions; and the tea was cold, and so was the toast. But nobody minded; they were all a great deal too happy; and the only drawback was, that Philip had to hurry away. But he was a man of business now, and it would never do to be behind his time; so he put on his new chain

with the air of a dandy, laid his paint-box and drawing-board in the cupboard, kissed his sisters and his little brother, wished them a happy new year for the last time, and set off to the warehouse in South Street.

CHAPTER X.

Now, although Philip had professedly given up all thoughts of being an architect, and had set himself to work at his new employment as if he had not an idea beyond it, yet in truth he was very far from intending to settle for life in Mr. Harland's warehouse. His pet scheme was still cherished within the recesses of his heart, where it throve amazingly well in spite of outward reverses. He had built a great castle in the air on the event of Mr. Wilkinson's visit; for, of course, he expected Mr. Wilkinson to call immediately; he could not understand the least delay in a matter so important.

The next day he hurried home from the warehouse, and, as he walked along, he looked at the mark of wheels in the snow, and wondered which of them had been made by Mr. Wilkinson's carriage, that he felt quite sure would be standing at the door.

But Philip was doomed to be disappointed. There was neither the carriage nor Mr. Wilkinson to be seen. However, he would be certain to come the next day, and again Philip hurried home with the words "Has Mr. Wilkinson been?" upon his lips.

Marian was very sorry indeed, but Mr. Wilkinson had not been; and she tried to moderate Philip's eagerness, represented to him how much engaged Mr. Wilkinson was, and that he had not said *when* he should call, and it was a pity to begin to expect him at present.

But this did not prevent Philip bustling in the next day, just the same, his face one great mark of interrogation.

"Has Mr. Wilkinson been?"

"No, dear, he has not. I did not expect him. It is quite too soon, considering that I only called the day before yesterday."

"But I did though. I expect him every day *now*," with an emphasis on the word *now*, as though he had waited to the utmost limits of human patience. "I wonder whether he will come to-morrow?"

To-morrow came. Philip set off to the warehouse in capital spirits, for he was certain that Mr. Wilkinson would come that day. Dinner-time came, and in rushed Philip—"Has Mr. Wilkinson been?" And then he could hardly eat his dinner for watching the carriages in the street, and jumping up at the least sound of anything stopping.

Everything now resolved itself into Mr. Wilkinson. The butcher's cart, the omnibus that drew up at the public-house below, the neighbours who dropped in to wish a happy new year, the tradespeople with their goods, even the boy who brought the newspaper, and the children who came round for Christmas-boxes—Philip's imagination transformed them all into Mr. Wilkinson. He could think of nothing else.

Marian felt quite sorry she had told him; it made so many disappointments. And when a fortnight had elapsed,

she too began to expect, and was disappointed as well. There was no Mr. Wilkinson, and she had to invent a hundred excuses to pacify her brother. Sometimes Mr. Wilkinson must be laid up with a cold—the prevailing complaint just then; or he might be gone to London on business, or be giving parties, for the new year would be sure to bring him a great many engagements. There was no end to the conjectures made upon his absence. But certain it was, that a whole month passed, and no Mr. Wilkinson.

All this time Philip was not idle, nor was Marian either. Philip worked steadily and well in South Street, and had already become a favourite with Mr. Harland. In the evenings he went on with his drawing, after giving Richard a lesson in Latin. Marian taught the children herself, and had dismissed one of the servants. She was glad to do this, because the winter had been a very hard one, and she had found out, some time since, that Mr. Harland did not exaggerate when he said their income would be very small indeed.

Marian was a capital manager, but still she had some difficulty in making both ends meet, and could only succeed in doing so by the most rigid economy. Every sixpence had to be thought seriously about before it was parted with, and then made to go as far as possible. All unnecessary luxuries had to be cut off, which they were without a murmur; and more than that, many little privations were endured with cheerfulness and fortitude.

The children were famous helps to Marian. Carry took unheard-of pains with her sewing, that she might help to make Philip shirts. Richard was always ready to go of an

errand, and made himself useful in a hundred ways. There was nothing they would not do for Marian, and a couple of willing affectionate children can work wonders in lightening the cares and labours of those around them.

One night they were settled as usual,—Philip at his drawing, Marian and Carry at work, and Richard spelling over his Latin lesson to himself,—when Philip suddenly threw down his pencils.

“I tell you what, Marian, this will never do,” said he; “I want some one to teach me—I cannot get on without.”

Marian laid down her work, and looked thoughtfully at her brother.

“That is the worst of being poor,” continued Philip; “one has no money to spend on anything! And yet, I am glad enough I popped into that place in South Street: it has helped us nicely through the winter.

“Indeed it has; I cannot think what we should have done without it,” replied Marian. “I do not like taking all your earnings, dear; but that greedy housekeeping swallows up every halfpenny just now.”

“Whether you like it or not, Marian, the earnings are yours, and always will be,” cried Philip warmly; “I only wish they were twice as much. I am sure such a good little housekeeper, as we have, deserves everything she can get.”

“I have often tried to screw a little out of the house-keeping,” continued Marian, laughing, “that you might have a few lessons in drawing; but it would not do. Just when I had locked it up, there was always a coal-man, or a tax-man, or a man of some kind with his face set money-fashion, who came and swept it off. So my efforts have all been fruitless.”

"No one but yourself would have thought of trying," said Philip affectionately.

"Ah, but I have another plan that I really think might succeed," continued Marian. "I have thought it over, and turned it over, and looked at it on all sides, and I do not see a single reason against it."

"And pray what is it?"

"Why, you know Mr. Gilbert, the drawing-master, is not very rich. The times are bad, and he has a multitude of children. Now, if I were to take one or two of his little girls, and teach them with Carry and Richard, he would very likely give you drawing lessons in return."

"Thank you, Marian. There is no end to the trouble you give yourself about my drawing; but I would rather not."

"But why? There is no reason against it: I am getting *au fait* at teaching now," said Marian, laughing.

"All the worse for you. I have no intention you should turn schoolmistress on my account," said Philip, looking very grave, though his heart bounded with affection and gratitude.

"I should not be a schoolmistress with only those four children," pursued Marian. "I find I have quite a knack with children—if you can pardon the expression. Perhaps it is my vocation."

"You have the art of making them love you, I know; but that is no reason why you should work like a slave, that I may have a few paltry lessons in drawing."

"Paltry lessons! Why you know, Philip, your very soul is in your pencil-case," returned Marian; "and that Mr. Wilkinson will call some day; and then, if he finds you improved, something may come of it."

"True; I forgot Mr. Wilkinson," said Philip, sighing; but I have quite given him up now."

"Nonsense! he is certain to come. Pray do not look so miserable, or I shall wish I had not told you."

"I will not look miserable; but you have no idea how much depended, in my own mind, upon that visit of Mr. Wilkinson."

"And much depends upon it still. I do not give him up. I know he will come; and then you can show him some drawings better done than those I took to him,—that is, if you will not be obstinate, but take my advice," said Marian coaxingly.

"I will think about it, Marian."

"It is past thinking about with me; and so to-morrow morning I shall put on my bonnet, and trot down the street, and——"

"Now, do not be rash—pray do not. I shall not like it at all!"

"It is not rash to carry out a well-digested scheme,—it is only prompt and business-like. However, you will see—what you will see."

The next morning, on went Marian's bonnet and cloak, and she set out for Mr. Gilbert's house. This time she succeeded beyond her expectations; that very afternoon her new pupils made their appearance, and in the evening Philip took his first lesson in drawing.

He came back in high spirits, and overflowing with gratitude to Marian. Mr. Gilbert had praised his performances, and pointed out their defects so kindly, and yet so skilfully, that Philip declared he felt himself improved already.

He sat up drawing till nearly twelve o'clock, when Marian

put out the lamp, and ran away with his drawing-book. And then he went to bed, to dream of being an architect, and to build his castle in the air a little higher.

It was now the beginning of March, and still Mr. Wilkinson had not come. The frost had broken up, and the snow had disappeared, and the men with their spades had disappeared too, and the milk-boy looked a little more comfortable. The mezereum-tree in the garden was in full bloom, and Carry and Richard had found a patch of violets in the lane. Spring was coming, and brought a thousand pleasant anticipations with it. It brought a vision of long rambles in green lanes, between hedgerows tipped with hawthorn; of windows thrown wide open, of the perfume of flowers, the hum of bees, and the sporting of butterflies in the sun. All this would happen very soon,—that is to say, unless the weather changed again, which it was apt to do so early in the season; for the year was quite a child at present, and could not keep in the same mind for long together.

One evening, as the orphans were seated at tea, Mr. Harland was announced. Mr. Harland had lately been a frequent visitor, and seemed to be getting very much attached to Marian and Philip. The easy-chair was brought out for him now as a matter of course, and he would be quite cheerful and pleasant, and the wrinkles in his face would get a little smoother before he went away.

That evening, his errand was to invite them all to tea on the following day.

“We are going to have a party of young people,” said he, “and I think you will like it. Besides, I wish to introduce you to my daughter Charlotte, Miss Marian. You are about of an age; and I suppose it is no difficult

matter for young ladies to become acquainted with each other?"

"I shall be very happy indeed, sir," said Marian, colouring, for Miss Harland was a stranger to her, and she felt rather nervous at the proposal.

"But Philip cannot miss his drawing lesson," said Carry, in a whisper loud enough for every one to hear.

"What! does Philip take lessons in drawing?" asked Mr. Harland, rather surprised.

"O yes, sir, it is all Marian's doing!" cried Carry eagerly. "She teaches Agnes and Ellen Gilbert instead."

"Hush! hush! you little chatterbox," said Marian blushing; "don't you remember that children should be seen and not heard?"

"But is it really true?" asked Mr. Harland, looking at Philip.

"It is indeed, sir," replied Philip, "Marian was bent upon it. It was her plan, and I only consented to it because I feel sure that, one day, I shall make something of the talent God has given me. I would put it aside, sir, if I could, but I cannot."

Marian stooped to pick up her handkerchief, and as she raised herself, Mr. Harland laid his hand gently on her head. "Bless you, child!" said he with unusual warmth; there is nothing like brothers and sisters helping each other on."

"I had something to do, sir, to persuade Philip into it," replied Marian, "and now he works at his drawing a great deal too hard, and teaches Richard Latin into the bargain."

"Richard shall come and take lessons with Willy if he likes. What do you say to that, my little man?"

"I should like to learn of Philip best," said the child, going up to his brother and taking fast hold of his hand.

"But if Philip has to work so hard, you would not wish to make him work harder still?" said Mr. Harland.

The child looked earnestly into his brother's face, and nestled closer to him.

"Do I give you a great deal of trouble, Philip?" asked he. "I always try to learn my lessons well."

"No, indeed!" said Philip, putting his arm round him; "you are the best little fellow that ever lived."

"Then you will go on teaching me, will you not?" said the child, laying his delicate cheek against Philip's rosy one.

"Yes, that I will!"

"O, thank you! thank you!" cried Richard joyfully. "I should not like any one to teach me but you."

Philip went on caressing his little brother, and then Carry, who thought it was quite her turn, darted to him, and, climbing on his knee, proceeded to give him what she called a regular "bear's hug."

Mr. Harland sat looking at them for a few minutes and then turned away and pretended to examine one of Philip's drawings which lay upon a stand near him. The contrast between these orphans and his own children affected him painfully, and he could hardly conceal his emotion.

Presently afterwards he took his leave, and no sooner was the door closed behind him, than a lively discussion arose about the invitation which had just been accepted. They went out so seldom that it was quite an event, and sundry little bits of finery had to be devised for the occasion. Carry's white frock had to be brought out, and trimmed with bows of ribbon, and her refractory hair was even threatened with curl-papers.

There was no reading or playing with the dominoes that night; for, as Philip said, nothing could be thought of but vanity.

“Ah, it is very fine of you, Master Philip, who have only to brush your hair and put on a pair of white gloves!” cried Carry, who was standing on the hearth-rug having her frock tried on; “of course we who are girls have all sorts of things to get ready!”

“That is because girls think so much more than we do about being smart,” returned Philip, giving himself the air of vast superiority; “we are the lords of the creation, and naturally treat such things with indifference.”

“I wonder who it is, then, that takes so much pains to set himself off to the best advantage before he goes out in the morning?” said Marian laughing; “a certain Philip, I think.”

“And who makes such a fuss if his collar does not fit, or his gloves are too large,” added Carry, wheeling suddenly round to look at Philip, to Marian’s great discomfiture.

“Stand still, you little chatterbox, or your frock will not be fit to be seen!” said she. “How you are grown, to be sure! it will not meet by an inch.”

“O Marian, I do so hate standing still! But I wonder what we shall play at to-morrow night,” said Carry, balancing herself first on her heels and then on her toes. “I can play at almost anything.”

“That you can, Carry. I will back you against any little girl in the three kingdoms,” said Philip, “and you can play for any length of time too, cannot you?”

“O yes, I do so love play! I like it better than anything else in the world!” said Carry emphatically.

"Better than your brothers and sisters, of course?"

"No! O, no! not better than you, and Marian, and Richard!" said Carry, suddenly flinging her arms round Philip's neck.

"Come now do be steady, and have your frock finished," said Philip; "look at Richard, he is as quiet and self-possessed as if there was nothing to be thought of but his Latin grammar."

"Richard does not like play half so much as I do. Do you Richard?"

"Why, Carry, if it were not for you, I think I should never play at all," said Richard, looking up from his book.

"What should you do, Richard, if you were left quite to yourself?" asked Marian.

"I should read as many books, and learn as many things as I could," said Richard thoughtfully; "so that when I was grown up I might be a clergyman, like my uncle Walter. Papa always said I should go to college, when I was old enough."

"Ah, but things are altered now, Richard!" said Marian with a sigh, "and I am afraid you will find it as difficult to go to college, and be a clergyman, as Philip does to be an architect."

"But never mind! persevere with your books my little man!" said Philip cheerily. "You see I do not give up the hope of being an architect, in spite of every difficulty. You must do the same, and if I succeed, you shall too. We will all push together—that is our motto."

The orphans could not have found a better one anywhere!

CHAPTER XI.

"WHAT a charming room this is!" said Marian, looking round the handsome boudoir into which Miss Harland had led her, for it was early, and the rest of the company had not arrived.

"It is very tolerable," replied Charlotte, seating herself on a luxurious sofa, and giving the last few touches to a bouquet of exotics for the middle of the table; "very tolerable indeed; but I wish papa would not insist on having that hateful bookcase here. In my opinion it quite spoils the effect of the room."

"And yet I hardly wonder at Mr. Harland's taste, for this is just the place to come and read in," said Marian.

"So papa thinks, and he would have his own way; it is so quiet and out of the noise of the children. Do not you find children an intolerable nuisance in a house?"

"O dear, no!" replied Marian, with a surprised look. "I would not be without them for the world!"

"How odd that is! but perhaps your little brother and sister are different to mine."

"They are very much like other children, I believe—full of fun and mischief; Carry is, at least. Richard is the quieter of the two, but even he enjoys a romp sometimes."

"Do they quarrel and fight ever?" asked Charlotte, throwing herself indolently back upon the sofa.

"O no, Miss Harland, you must be joking!"

"I am not, upon my word ! Fanny and Willy are always up in arms ; it is one continual quarrel from morning till night. I am trying to persuade papa to send them to school, after the holidays, for I am wearied out with them."

"But what do they find to quarrel about, I wonder?" said Marian simply.

"A hundred things! sometimes one begins it, and sometimes the other. Willy breaks Fanny's playthings, and then Fanny rubs out his sums to pay him off. What one wants to play at, is just the thing the other hates; and if any one gives them a book, they almost tear it to pieces in trying who shall get it first. And so they go on from January to December."

Marian had no idle curiosity, and it pained her to hear of family squabbles. She tried to turn the subject, but Charlotte seemed determined to take her into her confidence; and she had to hear, against her will, how Robert was the most provoking, aggravating boy in the world, and Fred the most insolent and overbearing.

"But Fred has left home now, that is one comfort," continued Charlotte. "It was quite against papa's consent; but they had a terrible quarrel on New Year's morning, and it ended in Fred taking himself off, and he has never been home since, though he goes to the warehouse just the same as ever."

"I am very sorry indeed to hear this," said Marian in a tone of concern; "do you know where he has gone to?"

"Yes, he has gone to lodge with Jem Franklin, one of the apprentices. Jem is an odious lad, and papa did not wish Fred to have anything to do with him. That was precisely the reason why Fred chose him for his friend."

"But can you do nothing to bring him back?" asked Marian, shocked at the indifference which Charlotte displayed.

"O, nothing whatever! He is so headstrong and obstinate, it would be absurd to attempt doing him any good. Besides, to tell you the truth, I enjoy having him away: there is one less to quarrel with, and I shall be very sorry if he ever comes back."

"But that cannot be right!" said Marian earnestly; "if it were Philip who had done so, it would break my heart."

"My heart is not so easily broken," said Charlotte with a careless laugh; "but perhaps you love your brother?"

"Of course I do!" cried Marian warmly.

"Well, that makes all the difference. I do not love either of mine. But, hark! there is some one come. It is Lilla Wilkinson, so we must go into the drawing-room."

"Dear me, is Miss Wilkinson coming? I am so glad," cried Marian, as she looked out of the window at the well-known carriage and its pair of grey horses.

"Do you know her? She is a tolerable sort of person, only she will chatter so. It is very much like sitting in the room with a magpie. But come along." And Charlotte drew Marian's arm in hers, and conducted her into the drawing-room, where, a moment after, Miss Wilkinson was announced.

Lilla looked very pretty indeed, in her white dress, and a string of pearls in her hair. Marian was almost dazzled by her beauty, and so was Philip, who caught the name of Wilkinson, and turned round with a look of intense eagerness.

Lilla made her way to Marian, for the room was now filling with guests, and began to talk with her usual volubility.

"How do you do? I am so glad to see you. I have wanted to call upon you for such a time, and so has my uncle. He has been very busy indeed, going backwards and forwards to London, and a million other engagements besides. But he has not forgotten his promise, and I dare say he will call next week."

"Do you hear that, Philip?" said Marian, turning to her brother, her eyes sparkling with delight; "do you hear? Mr. Wilkinson is very likely to call next week."

"O, I am so glad!" cried Philip, rubbing his hands with glee; "I have been expecting him so very long, I had almost given him up."

"But my uncle always keeps his word. He never disappoints anybody. So you are the Philip we have heard so much about, are you?" said Lilla, fixing her eyes upon him with a look of curiosity.

"Yes," replied Philip, laughing, "I am *the* Philip—brother to the good sister who took Mr. Wilkinson by storm, and tormented him about my drawings. I hope he has forgiven us?"

"She did not torment him," said Lilla, playing with her fan; "he has done nothing but talk about her ever since. I liked the drawings very much indeed myself, and I know something about drawing, too," added she, with the air of a critic.

"It was very good of you to like them," said Philip warmly, and taking a chair next to her. "I have improved a great deal since then; and I hope Mr. Wil-

kinson will think so, if he condescends to look at any more."

"I am sure he will do that: he is so much interested in you. He had hard work to become an architect himself."

"Indeed!" said Philip, delighted to have got upon the subject that was so near his heart. "I wish you would tell me about it?"

"That I will," said Lilla, equally delighted to have found some one to talk to; and she related the whole story, as she had done to Marian, only with more amplifications and digressions. "And you may depend upon it, he will help you on, in some way or other," added she.

"Do you think so? How happy you make me!" cried Philip eagerly. "I am so glad we have met, Miss Wilkinson," continued he, with increased cordiality; "it is a pleasure I did not anticipate."

Philip never enjoyed himself so much as that evening. He would have liked to go to a party every night of his life, provided Lilla Wilkinson were there. He thought her the most charming creature he had ever seen. He danced with her, talked to her, took her down to supper, pulled crackers with her, told her all about his castle in the air, and it seemed as if they might have been playfellows from their very cradles.

Carry and Richard were not so fortunate as Philip. They had been sent to play in the nursery, where the younger visitors were assembled, and made a party of their own. But in the midst of the evening, Philip had felt a little hand slipped into his, and, looking down, had seen Richard, with a very piteous expression of face.

"I wish I might stay with you, Philip," whispered he; "I do not like being in the nursery."

"And why not, my little man? What is the matter?" said Philip kindly.

"Fanny and Willy quarrel so, and call each other names. I cannot bear to hear them; so I slipped away, and came to you. Pray do not send me back again."

"No, that I will not. But go to Marian, there's a good boy. Don't you see her, sitting next to that young lady in pink? Boys ought not to keep together in a party."

It was the first time in his life that Philip had wanted to get rid of his brother.

Richard did as he was bid; and Philip was left in the undisturbed enjoyment of Lilla Wilkinson's society. The evening flew like magic, and he could hardly believe it possible, when Marian came and whispered to him that it was time to go home.

But he could not be persuaded to take his departure, until he had helped Lilla on with her cloak, and seen her into the carriage. Then he was quite at his sister's service, and the sooner they went the better.

"I think we have had a pleasant evening," said Marian, when they had reached home, and she had sent the little ones to bed, "only I am very tired. Good night, Philip."

"Do not go yet, Marian," cried Philip, who was in a state of unusual excitement. "By the bye, what a beautiful girl that is!"

"Who? Miss Simpson? She is considered quite a belle," said Marian, yawning.

"Miss Simpson! O no, I do not think her pretty at all; but Miss Wilkinson — she *is* a belle, if you like."

"I should like her better if she did not talk so fast," said Marian, lighting her candle.

"She does not talk a bit too fast for me. I like her better than anybody I have ever seen. What beautiful hair she has, Marian!"

"Yes, Philip."

"And what splendid eyes!"

"Yes, Philip."

"And what pretty little hands!"

"Yes, Philip."

"And how well she dances!"

"Yes, Philip."

"And she is coming with her uncle to call. Only think of that, Marian! You must have everything in apple-pie order."

"Good night, Philip;" and Marian took up her candlestick.

"I will go and have my hair cut to-morrow," continued Philip, looking at himself in the glass.

Marian laughed outright.

"What are you dreaming about, Philip? You are in your first sleep, I think. Pray go to bed;" and she opened the door.

"I say, Marian—what a hurry you are in!"

"It is past two in the morning, remember."

"Ah, so it is! good night;—but, Marian——"

"Well, what is the matter now?"

"You think her very handsome, don't you?"

"Who? — Miss Wilkinson? O yes—very handsome indeed! Good night."

"But, Marian——"

"Well,"—rather impatiently.

"I think she likes me a little, don't you?"

"O! that is it, is it? Good night;" and Marian went upstairs, laughing all the time.

As for Philip, he fell into a profound reverie, and sat with his feet on the fender until the last cinder had dropped out of the grate. Then, starting up, he exclaimed in a decided tone, "Yes, yes—I will be an architect! and, what is more, I will—but, never mind—we *shall* see what we *shall* see." And having thus given vent to his feelings, he took up his candle, and marched off to bed.

CHAPTER XII.

EXCEPT their *tête-à-tête* in the boudoir, Marian had seen little of Miss Harland the evening of the party; and, to say the truth, there was such an absence of sympathy between them, that she had no desire to cultivate the acquaintance. Charlotte's unfeeling way of speaking of her brothers and sisters shocked Marian beyond measure, and was a language quite new and strange to her. It seemed scarcely credible that such a state of things should be in existence; and as for the poor outcast, Fred, the thought of him haunted her the whole night, and she determined to ask Philip to use his influence in persuading him to return home.

Philip did not know much of Fred's affairs, for two reasons. First, because he had a motto that he stuck to very closely, to mind his own business, and let other people's alone; and secondly, because Fred's overbearing disposition led Philip to keep as much aloof from him as possible. Still, he could not help hearing all the particulars of Fred's quarrel with his father, and his leaving home, for it had been talked of in the warehouse, and a great deal made of it.

"I do not wonder at it, Marian," said he; "they are all sixes and sevens, if one may use the expression. Fred and Robert never speak a civil word to each other."

"But, Philip, it seems such a dreadful thing! Now, if you had left home——"

"O, but I should never be likely," interrupted Philip; "I love you far too dearly, Marian, and home is such a happy place;" and he began to whistle the tune of "Home, sweet home," as he put on his boots by the fire. "I wonder, by the way, whether Miss Wilkinson will call to-day."

"Perhaps Fred's home has not been so happy as ours," persisted Marian, "and that is the reason why he has gone wrong. Do, Philip, try and persuade him to go back!"

"I! I have no influence with him—not a jot; he would very likely turn round upon me, and be insolent."

"I do not think he would. His brothers and sisters seem not to care for him a bit, and he must be very wretched. Perhaps he would be glad of some one to speak to him, and to take an interest in him."

"He looked miserable enough yesterday morning, now I remember. That odious Jem Franklin dodges him every-

where, like his shadow. I fancy the quarrel with Mr. Harland was about some money that Fred had lost at cards with Jem. Do you know that rascal had the audacity to pester me to take a hand at cards?"

"O Philip! but of course you did not."

"Of course. I answered him rather sharply, and he has never ventured upon the subject again. The idea of my gambling away money that is wanted at home, and defrauding you all, when you are willing to give up so much for me!"

"Well, dear, not more than you deserve," said Marian affectionately.

"And then, the fellow had the impudence to call me a milksop, because I would not go with him to hear a man named Sparks prate about liberty and the rights of the people! Not I, indeed. It must be a very great attraction that could draw me away from our own fireside," added Philip, as he got up to put on his cloak.

"But you will think of what I have said, Philip?"

"Yes, I will. I am really very sorry for Fred; but, Marian, if Miss Wilkinson should call while I am out, be sure you keep her till I come home."

"Miss Wilkinson? O, then, Mr. Wilkinson goes for nothing now, I suppose!" said Marian archly.

"Ah, but Miss Wilkinson is so pretty, and such a charming girl! Don't you think so, Marian?"

"You have asked me that a hundred times at least," replied Marian laughing; "of course I do."

"That is right! good bye! I must be off. Where are the two little ones I wonder?"

"Here we are," cried Carry, who had just come in from

playing in the garden, her windmill in her hand minus a sail, and the little man with both his arms worked off—she was hanging round Philip's neck in a minute.

"There! there! do not smother me! Good bye, Richard, and be good children, and do not get into mischief!"—an injunction that was received with a peal of laughter, in which Philip heartily joined.

This scene happened every morning as regularly as clock-work, and nobody ever seemed tired of rehearsing it.

Philip walked briskly to the warehouse, thinking, as he went along, what he was to say to Fred. Poor Fred! he pitied him very sincerely, and all the more so because none of his own family seemed to care about him, and Robert exulted openly in his disgrace. This utter absence of home affection puzzled Philip as much as it had done Marian; and yet there must, he thought, be some love among them, if it were only a little spark. And surely if anything could kindle it, it would be the wish to save a brother from destruction.

Philip made up his mind to speak to Fred, and watched for an opportunity all the day; but none presented itself until the evening, and it was time to go home. Then Philip contrived to loiter until Fred came out, when he joined him, and began, as they walked down the street, to enter into conversation with him.

"Good evening, Fred; pleasant weather we are having now."

Fred made no answer; he looked very thin and careworn, and seemed as if he did not wish to be spoken to.

"I will walk a little way with you, Fred," said Philip kindly, and feeling determined not to be repulsed.

"Thank you, you need not trouble yourself, I shall be home directly."

"This is not the way home," said Philip with emphasis.

Fred stopped, and turned an angry glance upon him.

"Do not be angry," said Philip quietly, and putting his arm within his. "I want to talk to you a little. You are in need of a friend just now, Fred, I know you are."

Fred muttered a few incoherent words, but suffered Philip to lead him on. There was a quiet firmness about Philip that had its weight. In the warehouse he was universally respected, and both Robert and Fred had found it necessary to keep up a decent appearance towards him.

"Lookers-on generally see the most of the game," continued Philip, "and I see very clearly, Fred, what the end of your game will be."

"What will it be, pray? since you know so much more of my affairs than I do myself," said Fred sullenly.

"It will be ruin, Fred; for you are being led away from everything that is good—from your duty, from your home, from your God," added Philip solemnly. "And for what? simply to gratify a pique, and to indulge feelings of pride and anger. You know in your heart that it is not right—it is not worthy of you."

"I know I have been shamefully treated," cried Fred; "and if you must preach, go and preach to them at home; they drove me to it."

"But you might have tried a great many remedies before you ventured on the desperate one of leaving home," replied Philip. "Did you ever try conciliation, Fred?"

"No, I am not mean and pitiful enough for that, thank goodness! I am not a child, nor a woman!"

"The Bible says that greater is he that conquereth his own spirit than he that taketh a city. And our Saviour forbids us to let the sun go down upon our wrath."

"Ah, it is all very well! but I know what I am about better than you do. I shall ride over their heads some day, and then I shall pay Robert off for his sneers, and Lotte, too, for passing me in the street yesterday without speaking. Oh, how I wish that time were come!"

"And when it is come, you will be the most miserable wretch in the world."

"What should I be miserable for? I shall be as happy and as proud as a prince!"

"Our passions are desperate tyrants when they get the better of us, Fred, and the bad feeling you are indulging now, will rule you with a rod of iron. You will find it out by-and-by."

"Not I! I was born for something better than to have my life fretted away by their ill-temper. I was born to be a hero, Philip!" and Fred flourished his stick in the air.

"I should think you a hero if you were to overcome evil with good," said Philip quietly. "But do be persuaded to go home again."

"Me! Never, never! They do not want me at home,—they hate me, and are only too glad to be rid of me."

"It is quite impossible, Fred! natural affection is strong in us all. I will never believe that brothers and sisters can hate each other."

"Then you may believe it now. There is no love lost between us, I fancy."

"Kindness begets kindness, Fred, all the world over, and affection draws forth affection, as naturally as the sun does

the flowers in spring. If you would try my plan of conciliation, you would soon begin to love each other."

"Ah, Philip, you are thinking of your sister Marian, and those little ones you are so fond of! but they are no rule for us. So go home, and make the most of their affection. It is of no use your saying anything to me."

"O Fred! be advised,—go back while you may! Go back, and show them that you are strong enough and wise enough to be superior to all their petty squabbles! Get an influence, and use it to heal up divisions, and bring to your home the olive-branch of peace! It would be a nobler work than the one you are pursuing."

Fred did not immediately reply. There was evidently an impression being made upon him. That he was in a wretched position now, he knew as well as Philip could tell him; and perhaps the remembrance of the comforts and luxuries he had enjoyed in his father's house had some weight with him, to say nothing of a better motive, that had never been appealed to before.

"Well, Philip, you may be right—but it could not be done," said he at length.

"Try—only try!" cried Philip eagerly; for Fred's countenance showed signs of indecision. "Come, I will walk with you to the door. Be determined to do right, and leave the future to God."

Fred suffered Philip to turn round, and they had now their faces homeward, Philip still arguing the point with a feeling and earnestness that were quite irresistible.

"No, no! I cannot do it!" said Fred, hesitating, and drawing back, "it is so humiliating."

"O yes, you can—it is so clearly your duty."

"They will despise me for my weakness."

"They will respect you for your moral courage."

"And then, what will Jem say?"

"Never mind Jem—he is an evil counsellor;" and Philip actually rang at Mr. Harland's bell.

"I say, Philip, stand outside a bit, and see the end. Ten to one I shall come out again."

"I hope not—but I will walk up and down the street for a few minutes."

"There are Jem and Mr. Sparks coming to look for me."

"Go in, and I will settle Jem."

Fred went in, and the door closed.

All the family were assembled in the drawing-room as Fred entered it. Philip's words had roused some good feelings in his heart. He felt sorry for the past,—he felt as if he would love his brothers and sisters if he could. Perhaps, after all, there was such a thing as natural affection. He remembered having known it when he was a child—but it had become extinct. Could it ever struggle into life again?

Mr. Harland was reading the paper by the fire. He looked up sternly, and fixed a keen, and, as Fred thought, an unfeeling eye upon him. No one stirred. Charlotte went on pouring out the tea, as though he had not been in existence. Robert stared coldly at him; and Fanny said, in a whisper quite loud enough for him to hear,—

"How sorry I am he has come back!"

"Well, sir! so you have returned to your senses at last," said Mr. Harland, in a severe tone.

"I am here, at all events, sir," said Fred, drawing a chair to the table, and trying to appear at his ease. "And now, Lotte, will you give me a cup of tea?"

Charlotte made no answer, but pushed a cup of tea across the table, as if it was more than he had a right to expect.

It was evident that no one was glad to see him. There was not a word of welcome—not a symptom of affection. It was not such a home as Philip had imagined,—but, with the best intentions, Philip had been mistaken. He could not be expected to know anything of such a home as this. Fred, to do him justice, tried to make the best of his situation. He was resolved to talk, whether or not, and addressed himself to Robert. There was no answer. He then turned to Charlotte, but she did not vouchsafe any reply.

“Why do not you speak to your brother when he speaks to you?” said Mr. Harland impatiently.

“I have nothing to say to him,” said Robert, shrugging his shoulders.

“Only that, now he is come home, I hope he will know how to behave himself,” said Charlotte, with a toss of her head.

“And not push us about, and be so disagreeable,” whispered Fanny.

“I’ll tell you what—you will soon drive me back again, all of you!” said Fred, giving the table a thump, as he had seen Mr. Sparks do in his orations.

“I will have no violent conduct here, Fred,” said Mr. Harland; “so mind what you are about.”

Fred controlled himself with immense difficulty. He wished he had not taken Philip’s advice, and that he were well out of the house. There was no enduring this. He must break loose again, and that very speedily, or there would be violent conduct on one side or the other.

Meanwhile, another scene was transpiring in the street. Jem and Mr. Sparks were, as Fred had said, on the look out for him; and their astonishment was great indeed when they saw him at the door of his own house. To have him return home was quite contrary to Mr. Sparks's policy. He foresaw that Fred would prove a useful instrument in advancing certain schemes he had in hand, and the more he was isolated from his family the better. Unfortunately, the link that bound him to his home was a feeble one, and it required very little energy to break it. Both Jem and Mr. Sparks hated Philip, as falsehood and wrong are the enemies of truth and uprightness. They saw at once how it was. Fred had escaped them, and here was Philip standing to cover his retreat. Mr. Sparks's vulgar face was red with ill-dissembled passion.

"And pray where has our young gentleman gone to?" said he to Philip.

"Mr. Frederic Harland has gone *home*, sir, I am happy to say," replied Philip, laying an emphasis on the word *home*.

"Oh, indeed! and that is your doing, is it?" cried Mr. Sparks, getting up a great bluster.

"Yes, it is my doing," said Philip, quietly. "Good evening, sir;" and he turned on his heel to walk away.

"You are not going to escape in that manner, my lad," said Mr. Sparks, following him close up. "Who gave you any authority to interfere with Mr. Frederic Harland's concerns? Do you know who I am, sir?"

"Oh, yes, I know you quite well, Mr. Sparks," said Philip drily.

"Well, sir, and do you dare to contradict *me*?"

"I have, happily, nothing whatever to do with you," replied Philip; "and again I have the honour of wishing you good evening."

"But you shall answer to me for this," cried Mr. Sparks, catching Philip's arm. "What right had you to beguile that poor silly youth away from me, his best friend and protector, and persuade him to go home again, to be bullied and hectorred over and ill-treated by that tyrant of a father, and those ——?"

"Mr. Sparks," said Philip, throwing him off with disdain, "have the goodness to let me pass. I am a peaceable subject of the queen, and if you detain me another instant, I will give you in custody to the first policeman who comes in sight."

Mr. Sparks shrank back and scowled. Philip was more than a match for him, in spite of all his bragging.

"Why did you not come and help me, you cowardly dog?" cried he, turning round upon Jem.

"O sir, I would rather deal with any one than with Philip! But had we not better go home? It is of no use standing cooling our heels here for nothing."

"Ah, yes! Go home, indeed! and that young fellow has given us the slip. I'll have him yet! There are more ways than one of catching him."

"To be sure there are," said Jem, soothingly, and conducting Mr. Sparks to his lodgings.

It was no easy matter to entertain Mr. Sparks that night. He was alternately sullen and savage; thumping the table in his fury, and threatening vengeance upon Philip,—a threat at which Jem smiled, for he knew that Philip was safe from any vengeance Mr. Sparks could inflict.

At length—for it was a very long evening indeed—at length, a well-known footstep was heard upon the stairs. It was Fred, who entered the little smoky room, pale and haggard.

“Why, my lad! my young Briton!” cried Mr. Sparks, jumping up with such delight that he nearly upset the candle; “I was afraid I had lost you.”

“So you would have done, Mr. Sparks, if my brothers and sisters had had a single jot of kindness in them!” said Fred, flinging himself into a chair. “But I have done with them for ever now.”

“Did not I tell you how it would be?” said Jem; “why need you have tried them again? It was Philip set you on; I know it was.”

“Ah, that Philip! Will no one rid me of that Philip!” said Mr. Sparks, passionately.

“Philip is a happy fellow,” said Fred, sadly. “He and his brothers and sisters are like the bundle of sticks that no one can break. I stand alone, and you can do as you please with me. It is union that makes people strong.”

“Never mind! you have fallen into good hands,” said Mr. Sparks; “don’t be downhearted. You are to give a lecture to-morrow night, and we’ll drink to its success. Let us have some ale, Jem. Here’s to Mr. Frederic Harland, and may he never go home any more!”

Fred’s spirits revived under Mr. Sparks’s flattery. His irritated feelings were all poured out, and he declared he would never set foot in his father’s house again. How he hated it! and how he hated everybody in it, and how they all hated him! But he would pay them off, with interest,

some day, that he would! He would ride over their heads, and crush them under his feet! And the day was not far distant. The workmen—so Mr. Sparks told him—were on the eve of rising. Seditious meetings were being held in secret. They could not always be ground to powder. They would turn against their oppressors. They only wanted a leader, and he would put himself at their head; and then—let his family look to it!

CHAPTER XIII.

“O PHILIP, Mr. Wilkinson is come at last!” cried Carry, meeting her brother, as he came in at the front door, one day at dinner-time.

“Mr. Wilkinson! did you say *Mr.* Wilkinson, Carry? and is not Miss—dear, how disappointing!”

“Yes, there is that beautiful young lady with him, that you danced with at Mr. Harland’s.”

“That’s right! that’s capital!” cried Philip, and he whisked Carry up in his arms, and gave her a kiss; then setting her down—“there! there! run along and do not hinder me; I must make myself fit to be seen.” And he scrambled away into his own room, and began a hasty toilette, trembling all the while with eagerness, and utterly unable, in the confusion of his ideas, to lay his hands on anything.

“Are you coming, Philip?” said Marian, tapping at his door.

"O yes, directly!" replied Philip, flinging his brush into one corner, and his old coat into another. "Do wait a minute, Marian! I must just—there, that will do! I never can pull this coat on in a hurry! and my hair will stand out like the quills of a porcupine! Now then!" and Philip, his eyes very bright, and his cheeks unusually rosy, opened the door.

"Well, upon my word! are you going out to dinner, Philip?"

"No! O no! but you see—that—Miss—that is to say, when visitors come, one likes to be a little decent," said Philip, flourishing a white handkerchief, and giving his arm to his sister.

"Decent? but you have all your best clothes on. O Philip, Philip!"

"Well, and if I have, it will do them good to air them; I should not like—at least it would be a pity if——"

"Miss Wilkinson did not see you to the best advantage," said Marian laughingly.

There was no time for Philip to reply, except by a saucy look, and they entered the parlour, where Mr. Wilkinson was sitting talking to Richard, with whom he seemed to be already on excellent terms.

"Well, Mr. Philip, and how does the architecture go on?" asked he, rising, and holding out his hand with great cordiality.

"Very well, sir, thank you," replied Philip, looking sharply round the room; "but I thought—I thought, somebody told me, that Miss Wilkinson was here."

"So she is, only that little dark-eyed sister of yours has beguiled her into the garden, to see some prodigy of digging

that she and Master Richard have achieved this morning. I was afraid you would think I had forgotten you," added he kindly.

"I did begin to think it rather long, sir; but I have not been idle all this time. I have been working very hard indeed since Marian took the liberty of calling upon you."

"Ah, that is the way to get on! You begin to like your new employment now, I dare say. I told you it would be so, and you see I was right," said he to Marian.

"I like it, sir, because it is a means of earning an honest livelihood, but for no other reason," said Philip quickly.

"And a very good reason, too! What could you do better than get into a profitable money-making concern like that? Mr. Harland, no doubt, has made his thousands by this time," said Mr. Wilkinson, as he stood on the hearth-rug, his hands clasped behind him.

Philip secretly thought he should have liked better to be an architect than to be in Mr. Harland's warehouse, in spite of the thousands.

"Well, what have you to say against it?" continued Mr. Wilkinson, amused at the expression of Philip's face.

"I am very anxious, of course, to do my duty to Mr. Harland," replied he; "but the evenings are my own, and I have spent them in drawing. I am receiving a little instruction now; and if you would be kind enough to cast your eyes over the designs I have been making lately——"

"What! am I to look at them again?" said Mr. Wilkinson, in rather a disconcerted tone.

"You have never seen these at all, sir," replied Philip, bringing out his folio. "I have done them very carefully, and avoided as much as possible the faults of the last. You see

I am too deeply in love with the art to give it up," added he, smiling.

"But you must not waste your time on these things! Well, that is better, decidedly, and that better still. You have improved, there is no question," continued Mr. Wilkinson, taking up the drawings; "there is taste and feeling about them. Who is it that gives you instruction?"

"Mr. Gilbert, sir."

"Ah, he will do very well for the present. He excels, in architectural drawing. But now I wonder," added Mr. Wilkinson, going back to the hearthrug, "what there is in being an architect that is so fascinating? How did you get this freak into your head?"

"I do not know, I am sure, sir. I suppose Dame Nature will have to answer for it," replied Philip, laughing.

"Ah, Dame Nature will have to answer for a great deal some of these days!" said Mr. Wilkinson, pretending to look grave; "but not for more, I think, than this good sister of yours, who has done her best to foster your whim, even at the risk of being buried in a snow-storm."

"I did not mind the snow-storm at all," cried Marian eagerly; "I felt so anxious that Philip should be encouraged, and that you should look at his drawings."

"And that I should say he was a great genius, eh?" returned Mr. Wilkinson. "You made up your mind to that before you started, I know you did."

"I do think very highly of Philip; I cannot help it, sir," said Marian, putting her arm within her brother's, as they stood side by side before Mr. Wilkinson.

"You spoil me sadly, Marian, dear. I am aware of that," said Philip, tenderly. "But the truth is," sir, added he, ad-

dressing Mr. Wilkinson, "we are orphans, and quite alone in the world. Our only strength lies in pushing together; we always did it from our childhood upwards; I suppose it is a habit we have got," added Philip, laughing.

"And a very good habit it is; you could not have a better one," said Mr. Wilkinson, cordially. "So push away, and nothing will be able to stand before you."

"How do you do, Mr. Philip? I hope you are well. No, Carry, I cannot run any more races; I am quite out of breath;" and Lilla—for it could be no other—came hurrying in, threw herself into an easy-chair, and, untying her hat, shook her curls into order, and looked so exceedingly pretty, that Philip forgot every earthly thing beside her.

"I am afraid that rosy-cheeked sister of mine has tired you out, Miss Wilkinson," said he. "She is the veriest little romp in existence."

"O no! she is delightful! She and Richard are going to dig a tank in the garden, where they think gold and silver fishes may be enticed into living. Poor Richard has had enough of it, I suspect, for he soon gave Carry the slip; and there she has been, digging all by herself, with the most dogged resolution."

"I do not like digging; it tires me so," said Richard, quietly. "I only did it to please Carry."

"Carry is rather too much for you sometimes, my little man," said Philip, patting him kindly on the head. "I must see after this digging myself by-and-by."

"But do you not think the gold and silver fishes will live in it, Miss Wilkinson?" asked Carry, in a tone of concern.

"I cannot promise you. They are troublesome little creatures, and die on the very slightest pretence."

"But I should not let them die; I should feed them with crumbs of bread, as we do the robins. I think they would be very happy, swimming about in that tank; do not you?"

"Perhaps they might. But you have not finished it yet; there is a great deal more digging to do, Miss Carry, before it is ready for the gold and silver fishes to swim in."

"O, I shall finish it very soon! I like digging. Besides, Richard"—and Carry looked round at her brother.

"Richard has had quite enough, I am sure," said Philip; "so you must wait until I can help you, Carry. I am a first-rate digger."

"O yes! but when will you begin? I am in such a hurry; I cannot bear having to wait."

"You must wait now, at all events, Miss Impatience," said Philip, laughing; "and then I do hope you will not work me till my arms drop off, as you did the little man."

"O Philip!"—and Carry climbed on his knee, and laid her rough little head on his shoulder—"O Philip! I love you a great deal too much for that!"

"Marian is bringing the children to see us on Monday," said Lilla, turning to Philip.

"And when business is over, perhaps you will give us the pleasure of your company too," said Mr. Wilkinson; "and then I will show you a few things worth looking at."

"O, I shall like it very much indeed!" cried Philip, his face brightening up with joy.

"And I will show you the garden, if it is not too dark to see it," said Lilla; "but are not those drawings? I should like a peep at them, if I may."

"By all means—I shall be delighted;" and Philip eagerly opened his folio, and spread them before her.

"I am sure these are very pretty! Uncle, don't you like them?" asked Lilla.

"Yes, I do; and I think Philip has improved wonderfully."

"And so do I. O, I am sure you will do something in time!" said Lilla, looking up to him with a face of encouragement. "You really must go on."

"I am going on," replied Philip—"there is a wonderful pertinacity in my disposition; and to turn back is the last thing I ever think about."

"I am glad of that; and, besides, you have the talent,—even my uncle acknowledges you have——"

"Come now, Miss Lilla," interrupted Mr. Wilkinson, "you are not to flatter him at that rate. You and Marian will certainly turn his head."

"O, pray let Miss Wilkinson go on!" cried Philip, colouring with pleasure.

"Well, then, I will go on!" said Lilla, shaking her head at her uncle in token of defiance,— "a certain person, whose opinion is of great value, says that——"

"Come, come! put on your hat, and I will put on mine; it is quite time we went home," said Mr. Wilkinson.

"Says that you are sure to succeed, and be——"

"Good-bye, Miss Marian," interrupted Mr. Wilkinson; "I hope you will come early."

"And be an architect in the end!—There! now I have got it out at last," said Lilla, shaking hands with Philip; "so I hope his words may come true."

"And so do I," said Philip, with great delight. "And for more reasons than one," added he to himself, as he closed the front door behind them.

"O, Marian! you like her now?"

"I like her very much indeed!" cried Carry; "she says she will give us some gold and silver fishes, and some seeds to sow in our gardens. O, how nice it will be to go and see her! I wish Monday were come!"

Philip's eyes were all this time fixed on Marian, with an inquiring look.

"Yes, dear, I think her very amiable indeed," replied she, "and I quite love her for giving you all that encouragement."

"Ah, Marian! I shall go to work with redoubled energy. There is nothing like a little praise, it oils the wheels famously. An architect in the end! I shall remember that! And now there is barely time left for me to have my dinner."

It was a day for visitors. In the afternoon, when Marian was sitting at work, there came another tat-tat at the door, and Miss Harland was announced.

Charlotte was very handsomely dressed indeed; and as she swept into the room, with her flounces, and her crinoline, she seemed nearly to fill it up. However, by a little dexterity, she contrived to bring her finery into some kind of subjection, and to settle herself and it upon the sofa.

"I hope you are all quite well at home," said Marian, when the first civilities were over. "I saw Fanny and Willy go by the window, this morning, with bunches of violets in their hands."

"They are quite well, thank you; but do you know who should come in the other night, as we were sitting down to tea, but Fred!"

"Did he? how glad I am!" cried Marian joyfully; "and how delighted you must have been to see him!"

"Delighted! No, indeed! I thought it the most shameful piece of insolence I had ever heard of."

"Insolence?"

"Yes; what right had he to come back home any more?"

"It was his own home, Miss Harland," said Marian half indignantly.

"Yes; but after such behaviour, and when we were just congratulating ourselves on having got rid of him! However, he is gone for good now; that is one comfort."

"I hope you received him kindly, at all events," said Marian, not understanding what Charlotte meant by the latter part of her speech.

"We took no notice of him whatever! Neither Robert nor I condescended to speak to him."

"How very cruel! O, how could you do it? Your own brother too!" cried Marian, the tears in her eyes.

"His being my brother amounts to nothing," returned Charlotte; "I do not care a single jot either for him or Robert. Robert is quite as disagreeable in his way; and if he were to start off to-morrow, and never come back, I should be all the better pleased."

"We will talk of something else; it pains me to hear you speak so," said Marian.

"But I must tell you how it ended. Of course we would neither of us speak, and then papa was angry, and wanted to make us; and then Fred began to get angry too, and papa put him down by saying he deserved it, in which we heartily coincided. We did speak then, and Fred answered

us, and there was such a disturbance! and then Fred went away, and banged the door after him, and said he would never set foot in the house again until he could pay us off with interest! Did you ever hear such an expression?"

"Poor Fred! there is no hope for him now; he must come to ruin," said Marian in a tone of great compassion.

"Of course he must; we quite expect that," said Charlotte, who had risen from her seat, and was looking idly out of the window. "Why, I declare you can see all that goes on in the opposite house! I should think it is good fun to sit here and watch your neighbours."

"I have little time for that; but pray mind, Miss Harland, you are spoiling my pretty rose-tree;" and Marian flew to rescue it from the flounces and furbelows that had already knocked it over, and scattered its flowers on the carpet.

"O, that rose-tree? I am very sorry; these dresses are so inconvenient. I will send you a better tree than that from our greenhouse."

"Do not trouble to do that; I only value the tree because Richard gave it to me; he knows how fond I am of flowers. I am very sorry anything has happened to it, for his sake."

"Richard is your brother, I suppose. That little quiet creature who kept so close to you at our house."

"Yes, dear little Richard! he is the most tender-hearted affectionate creature in the world!"

"O, indeed! But I must go, I have some more calls to make. I hope it will not be long before we have the pleasure of seeing you." And, with another threatening sweep of her petticoats, Charlotte departed.

"It would be very long indeed, if my own wishes were

consulted!" said Marian, as she walked up and down the room to calm her irritation.

"Why, Marian, what is all this? I declare I could almost think you were in a passion, if I did not know that to be a moral impossibility," said Philip, who had come in as Miss Charlotte had stepped out.

"O, Philip! Philip! I am so thankful you are my brother!" cried Marian, throwing her arms round his neck, and fairly bursting into tears.

"Why, my dear little girl? Marian, what is the matter? Has anybody been frightening you? If they have, I will thrash them soundly for it."

"No, Philip, only those dreadful people! Miss Harland has been here, and she says that Fred did go home, and that they——"

"O yes, I know it every word," interrupted Philip; "it was I who persuaded him to go."

"I thought it was; and you see he would have gone back, and done better, if they had only been kind to him; and now—O, I had hardly patience to hear her talk!"

"I tell you what, Marian, dry your eyes, dear; I cannot bear to see you cry! there! there!" and he wiped away her tears with the greatest tenderness. "We do not understand quarrelling ourselves, and if we meddle and make with quarrelsome people, we shall only burn our own fingers. So we will let them alone for the future. And now where are the little ones? I am going to help dig at Carry's tank."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Good morning, Philip ; you are the model of punctuality, and I wish the rest of my establishment were like you."

It was Mr. Harland who spoke, as he and Philip were alone in the counting-house, early one summer morning.

It was just such a morning as would have made one eschew desks and counting-houses, and turn instead to woods, and dells, and grassy nooks, where the birds were singing, and the flowers were opening in all their freshness and beauty.

Philip had been among them already, and Carry and Richard too. They had been brushing the dew from the grass before any of the Harlands were awake, and Carry had wreathed her hat with honeysuckle, and Philip had been hunting about for wild strawberries, to carry home for breakfast. They all liked these early rambles, before the town of Linford was well awake, or the shops had opened their eyes to another day of business. And there was another thing Philip liked very much indeed. He always contrived to make a little circuit, and come home by the lane, along which Marian had once ploughed her way through the snow.

And a pretty lane it was at this season of the year ; for the hay-makers were at work in the meadows on either side, and the wild roses were bursting into luxuriance on the

hedges. But it was not the hay-makers Philip thought about, or the roses either, though they cost poor Carry many a scratch; he thought of a certain garden-gate, where it might so happen that a figure in a simple white dress and brown straw hat was to be seen. Lilla loved the early morning as much as Philip did, and it was perfectly natural that she should like to be out enjoying it. It was equally natural that she should like, now and then, to stroll down to the gate, and take a peep into the lane, and watch the milk-maids go tripping by. But it generally happened that Philip and the little ones were tripping by as well, and then she would blush, and pretend to be very much surprised; and then would follow a few words of gossip; and Master Philip was very fond of sending the little ones forward to tell Marian he was coming directly, though they had always finished breakfast when he did get home, full of spirits, and loud in the praise of Miss Wilkinson and of early rising.

On this particular morning, Mr. Harland had something he wished to say to Philip before any one else arrived.

"I am very much pleased with you Philip," said he kindly, "and I am going to make a little change that I hope may turn to your advantage."

"You are very good, sir," replied Philip, beginning instantly to think over the hundred and one things he wished to do, but could not for want of means—Richard, for instance, and his going to college, to say nothing of Marian, who never could be brought to confess that she wanted anything.

"Fred, I believe, does not intend to come to the warehouse any more," said Mr. Harland, speaking as if it were a matter of perfect indifference, though Philip could see

well enough how bitter the thought was to him. "I have waited a sufficient time to give him the chance, and he still holds out in his rebellion. I shall not wait any longer, but put Robert into his place, and, as soon as he is old enough, he shall be taken into the firm. You can, if you like, have the situation Robert now holds, and in that case your salary would be doubled."

"Thank you, thank you, sir!" cried Philip warmly, and his face radiant with delight; "only if Fred *should* come back, and I heartily wish he may, I shall be quite ready to give it up again. Poor Fred! I wonder, sir, if we could do anything to save him."

"Nothing whatever, and we will not mention his name again, if you please," said Mr. Harland sternly.

Philip bowed, and did not venture to say another word. Still his pleasure at being promoted was considerably damped. He felt strangely puzzled at the state of affairs in the Harland family, and was quite sure, if Fred had had such a sister as Marian, it would never have happened; and even if he had gone wrong, her affection must have won him back.

As Philip was passing down the warehouse, he felt some one pull his sleeve. It was Robert.

"I say, Philip, a few words with you. It is all out now, I suppose?"

"What is out?" said Philip, rather impatiently, for he disliked Robert—his ways, his manners, his disposition, and everything about him.

"The news of my being put into Fred's place, and then taken into the firm. That's capital, is it not? Will not you congratulate me?"

"I would gladly if it were not at your brother's expense," said Philip coolly.

"But he deserves everything that he gets."

"If we all had our deserts, Robert," said Philip, looking him steadily in the face, "we might not be quite so well off as we are."

"What do you mean by that? But come, do not be a fool, and mar your own fortune. It is a lucky chance for you, at any rate, and you would be sorry enough to give it up."

"If it were at the price of your brother's coming back, and taking his proper place, nothing would please me better."

"You will never make me believe you are as green as that comes to!" said Robert, with an insulting laugh.

"I am as honest as that comes to," said Philip, secretly longing to shake Robert off, as he would a spider or a venomous reptile.

"Ah, Philip, you are joking, and a joke is all very well in its way!" said Robert, dropping the insolent tone, and taking a familiar one. "You are a sharp clever fellow, and know how to make the most of your good fortune; yes, and to keep it too. You and I are linked together from this very moment."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Philip, retreating from him a few paces.

"Yes we are, and our game is easy enough to play. I want a year and a half to coming of age. Never mind. I will stick by you, if you will stick by me; that is a fair bargain."

"I do not know what you mean ; I stick to nothing but the business," said Philip laughing.

"But you will stick by me, and help me to keep Fred out!" cried Robert, putting his mouth to Philip's ear, and letting the words hiss through his teeth as if they had been serpents. "I will make it worth your while."

"I will make it worth your while to be dropping poison into my ear!" cried Philip, roused to sudden indignation ; "if you hint another word, I declare if I will not shake your cowardly body until it has not more than half a breath left in it!" And, with this energetic declaration, he marched off, leaving Robert as pale as ashes, and terrified beyond measure at what he had done.

"You will not betray me, Philip ! I did not mean it—pray, for pity's sake," cried he, hurrying after him.

Philip turned round, and his glance was so fierce and indignant that Robert again shrunk back in dismay.

"I might have known how it would be!" said he, wringing his hands in despair. "Jem always told me there was nothing to be done with Philip!"

It was some time before Philip's anger was sufficiently cooled to allow him to think over what had happened. His promotion was certainly a piece of good fortune, as far as he himself was concerned ; and it would enable him to do a great deal for his brother and sisters. His salary might have been trebled instead of doubled, to judge from the many things he meant to do with it. He would begin to save up for Richard first of all, and let him go to college ; and then Carry should come in for her share, and have better instruction as she grew older. And he would buy a new cloak for Marian, as soon as the cold weather came.

She should know nothing about it, still less have the buying of it herself, for then Philip knew how it would be. "No, no! she shall have a first-rate good one," said he to himself; and he wondered what sort of a hand he should make at choosing it—for what did he know of fashion? and yet he was determined that it should be fashionable. Carry was too little to help him. Who should he ask? There was but one person in the world—and the colour deepened on Philip's cheek—O yes! he would ask her, and she would do it for him in a minute. She had such admirable taste! and it would be a good excuse to go up to Mr. Wilkinson's, and have a little confidential conversation with her.

Philip, it must be confessed, contrived to get many of these confidential conversations, on one pretext or another, and it was doubtful whether he or Lilla liked them the best.

Lilla had improved very much of late. She had grown more thoughtful, and less chattering, and had set about cultivating her mind, which was rather an extraordinary proceeding.

One morning Marian found her in the summer-house, quite absorbed in study.

"Why, Lilla dear! how industrious you have become!" said Marian playfully, and sitting down by her side. "I never see you now without a book. What does it all mean?"

"It means that I am very ignorant—that is the fact," returned Lilla, sighing; "I never could learn anything when I went to school, could you?"

"I think I did a little, but school-girls are proverbially idle. So you are going to make up for it now by devouring

all those books at once;" and Marian pointed to a number of volumes on the table.

"It is Macaulay's 'History of England.' I really know nothing of history, except a few bald facts; and Philip says it is such a delightful book, and he recommended it."

"O! O! So it is Philip who is at the bottom of it!" said Marian archly.

"Why, you *see*," returned Lilla, looking down, and pulling to pieces the rosebud she wore in her bosom, "Philip is so very clever!—do not *you* think so, Marian?"

"O very!"

"You need not speak in that way, Marian—you know he is," said Lilla, rather impatiently; "and he has so many more things to think of, and to talk about than I have! I have nothing to talk about but the garden, and parties, and whether I went for a walk or stayed at home, or what my uncle is doing; and that is not conversation, is it?"

"It is one kind of conversation, Lilla, but not the best kind," replied Marian.

"It is not good enough for Philip to listen to," continued Lilla, "and so I am trying to get myself up a little nearer to his standard. I am not companion enough for him quite;" and Lilla, meeting Marian's eye, stopped short, and coloured violently.

"Well, go on," said Marian, laughing. "Not companion enough for him—I want to hear the end."

"Ah, you are making fun of me, Marian!" said Lilla, drawing close to her, and laying her head upon her shoulder to hide her blushes and confusion; "but I cannot help it—I do like Philip, so very, very much!"

"Do you, dear?" said Marian, putting her arm affectionately round her.

"O yes, indeed, I do! And, Marian—but you will not tell, will you?"

"No, I am sure I will not."

"And you will not make fun of me either?"

"How can you ask such a question?"

"Well, then," said Lilla, still keeping her face concealed, "I don't know how to get it out, and I would not tell any one in the world but you, not even my uncle—I may trust you, Marian?"

"Yes, I am sure you may."

"Do you know, Marian, if I ever—but I am never at all likely—I am quite sure never to be—to be—to be married; but if I should, I would rather——"

"Marry Philip than anybody else," said Marian, filling up the blank.

"O Marian! I did not say so," cried Lilla, lifting up her face, that, between blushes and surprise, looked as beautiful and as guilty as possible.

"No, dear, but you meant it, which is all the same thing."

"That is, because—but are you angry with me?"

"Angry with you? I like you more than ever; and it does not surprise me in the least; no one can help loving Philip, whether they will or not," said Marian earnestly.

"I am sure they cannot. He is so good, is not he?"

"O yes! and I have known his goodness, dear, longer than you have. He is the best brother that ever lived."

"And my uncle is so fond of him! He thinks he has a decided ability for being an architect, but he will not un-

settle him by telling him so. He says he is young, and if he takes to Mr. Harland's business, it will be less precarious than the other."

"Your uncle is very wise, Lilla; and as for Philip, I know whichever way he takes is sure to be the right one," said Marian warmly.

"And so do I," added Lilla, rising; "but now, come with me; I want to show you one of Philip's drawings that I begged the other day. I have had it framed, and now I do not exactly know where to hang it."

CHAPTER XV.

"I wish you would not keep coming between me and the light," said Charlotte to her brother Robert; "I know you do it on purpose!"

Charlotte was sitting in the easy-chair, reading a novel, and Robert was busy colouring slides for his magic lantern.

"I cannot help it. You always place yourself just where it is inconvenient for other people," said Robert, again throwing a shadow on her book.

"It is too bad for anything! Papa, I wish you would speak to him," cried Charlotte, laying her book in her lap.

"I wish you would be quiet, both of you!" said Mr. Harland, who looked unusually pale and agitated.

He had often looked pale and fatigued of late. His face had,

from some cause or other, grown haggard, and its furrows were ploughed deeper than, at his age, time alone could have made them. He was harsh and arbitrary as ever; his own will was paramount, and in his outward bearing there was no touch of softness or relenting. But none knew the yearning for affection that was in this proud man's heart; none knew the secret unbending, the feeling of regret and sadness when he heard the jarring voices of his children, and witnessed their dissensions. The longing after peace, and yet the hopelessness of obtaining it,—for domestic peace, with her calm and holy joys, had never spread her wings over his household. She had fled far away; it was no home for her—this atmosphere of discord and unrest!

There was, besides, another reason why Mr. Harland was looking more careworn and anxious than usual. The year had not answered the expectations entertained of it, when the bells rang it in so merrily, that clear starlight morning. It had been a disastrous year. Trade had been depressed, and an ill-feeling had shown itself amongst the working classes in the town of Linford. This ill-feeling had been fostered to the utmost by Mr. Sparks, whose business it was to make the breach between the masters and the men as wide as possible. All the summer he had declaimed in the fields, not to a handful, but to a concourse of people; and the sole object of his harangues had been to inflame the minds of his audience, and rouse them to vindicate their rights by force. One great grievance, of which the men complained, was, that they were allowed but three days work in the week. A deputation had been sent, by the more peaceable of the workmen, humbly petitioning an

extra day's employment. This request would have been granted, by every master in the town, if Mr. Harland had not exerted all his influence to the contrary. He was the largest manufacturer in the place, and employed by far the greatest number of hands. But he was also the most unpopular. His arbitrary temper made him detested. He had no sympathy with his men on any ground whatever. He regarded them as mere machines for working out his aggrandizement; and there was no other link to unite him with them. The law of love was as absent here as in his own household; and, in this season of distress, he had neither mercy nor compassion.

His family were as unpopular as himself. Charlotte, who managed the domestic affairs, indulged in every kind of extravagance; but she never expended a farthing in relieving the wants of the poor, or ministering to their necessities. It is well said, that "charity begins at home." There was no charity in Mr. Harland's house, so none could go forth from it, to return again in thanks and blessings.

Philip had stood, many times, between Mr. Harland and his men, when things had threatened to come to a crisis, and, by his sympathy and good advice, had prevented an outbreak. In a better sense than the one Mr. Sparks was so fond of using, he was the poor man's friend. They all loved Philip. He had a pleasant word to say to everybody; and out of his own earnings he contrived to make many a poor man's home less forlorn and wretched. He and Marian laid aside their private schemes in this time of general distress, and came forward to the help of the needy and unfortunate.

Philip was all for peace, and whenever an opportunity offered, he never failed to drop a healing word.

He was always representing to Mr. Harland the necessity of conciliation, and of showing forbearance to those who were suffering the pressure of want. He tried hard to induce him to give way in the matter of another day's employment, and even hinted what the consequences of a refusal were likely to be. But Mr. Harland was inflexible; he despised conciliation, and Philip had to bear the looks of disappointment with which the men received the news of his failure. They had trusted much to his influence with Mr. Harland, and all his soothing words could not prevent a deep and ominous murmur of discontent, and sundry threats that were very likely to be carried into effect.

The next day there was a strike for wages, and the men paraded the streets singing songs, and begging, or rather demanding, money at every house. Mr. Sparks had an overflowing audience; and there were symptoms of a coming tumult. Mr. Harland was warned of the risk he ran; and conciliation was preached to him by more advocates than Philip. But he despised all counsel, and had now returned home, conscious of an unusual amount of bodily fatigue, but strong in his resolve not to give way an inch, but to carry matters with a high hand.

"You always tell me to be quiet, papa," said Charlotte, in an irritated tone; "and I am the most ill-used person in the world! Robert does nothing but tease me from morning till night, and nobody interferes to prevent him."

"You have got rid of Fred, and you have got rid of the little ones, Charlotte," said her father. "It is a poor

tale that you cannot agree now there are only two of you left."

"I wish Fred might come back, if it were only to keep Robert in order," said Charlotte spitefully.

"I tell you what, Lotte, you are so aggravating, that some of these days you will really provoke me to strike you!"

"Do you hear that, papa? he says he shall strike me!"

"I said you were enough to provoke me into it; I never said I should do it," returned Robert.

"You did."

"I did not."

"Papa!"

"Sit down, Charlotte, and be silent both of you! I will not have another word spoken. Hark! what is that?"

"The wind, I think," said Robert; "it seems getting up to-night."

But it was not the wind they heard. It was a low ominous sound, a confused murmur of voices, as though a mob of people was congregated together not very far off. Every moment it grew more distinct—it came nearer and nearer—what could it be?

Meanwhile, Philip was hard at work at his drawing. It was the autumn, and the evening was gusty and cheerless, and there was a pattering of rain upon the brown and yellow foliage of the trees in the garden. Marian had had a fire lighted, and pleasantly it blazed away, and they had drawn the curtains, and, as Philip said, were playing at winter again.

Philip found ample consolation, in his favourite pursuit, for the vexations and tumults that were abroad just then.

He and Marian made a point of never talking on disagreeable subjects during the few happy hours they spent together. Philip liked better to ask her if she had seen Lilla; and, if she had, there was a great deal to be said about it. How Lilla looked, what she wore, what she had talked about; when she would come again, how she thought he was getting on, whether she had seen his last drawing, and if Mr. Wilkinson came with her, and if he had looked at it too? These were all important questions to Philip. And then he would add another stone to his castle in the air, and begin to say how some day or other he should—but never mind—Marian should see!

"See what? What will Marian see?" asked Carry, who was eminently matter-of-fact.

"Oh, she will see it raining silver pennies some of these days," said Philip gravely, and yet with the mischievous twinkle in his eye that the children were so fond of.

"But it cannot rain silver pennies ever; can it, Marian?" asked Carry, very much puzzled.

"If it did, we would run out and pick them up, would not we?" replied Marian, laughing.

"Only think how ridiculous!" cried Carry. "Philip, you are making fun."

"Me! Do I ever make fun? No, I cannot have you on my knee; I am a great deal too busy."

"But I should so like to see the silver pennies! When will it rain them?"

"I cannot possibly tell you. You must look in the almanack."

"Where is the almanack? O, Marian, do find it. I want so to see." And Carry began to rummage among the

books on the book-shelves. "Here it is. Will it rain them in January, Philip?" added she, beginning at the first page.

"I am afraid it will be too cold; they would get lost among the snow."

"O dear! Well, then, February, Philip? Do you think it will rain them in February?"

"The little birds would pick them up, if it did. No, Carry, I do not think it will rain them in February."

"Well, March, Philip? Philip, do you think it will rain them in March?" cried Carry, eagerly.

"No, for then the wind would blow them away."

"How tiresome! Well, May, Philip? It will rain them in May, will it not, Philip?"

"No, for then the sun would melt them. I am sure it will not rain them in May."

"Well, then, I do not think it will rain them at all," said Carry, throwing away her book in disgust.

"He is only making believe," said Richard, laughing; "it never did rain anything but hail, rain, and snow, in all the world."

"Except cats and dogs," said Philip; "everybody knows that."

"I wonder who that is at the door?" exclaimed Marian. "What a hurry they are in!"

"And what a queer noise that is somewhere or other!" rejoined Philip, laying down his pencils.

"It sounds like voices," said Richard, going to the window to listen.

"Perhaps it is the silver pennies coming down," cried Carry.

But an end was put to these conjectures by the entrance of Sally, who walked straight into the room without her usual knock.

"Please, Master Philip, you are to go to Mr. Harland's directly," said she.

"What is amiss, I wonder? Who is it, Sally?"

"It was only the footman, and he would not wait. He says his master's took ill, and they're expecting a disturbance."

"Ah, that I am not surprised at! I thought things must come to a pass before long," said Philip, putting away his pencils in a hurry.

"But Philip, dear, surely you are not going!" said Marian, earnestly.

"Of course I am; there is no doubt about that."

"But do not go into danger, Philip,—pray do not! Only think if there was to be a mob!" cried Marian, shuddering.

"Never mind; not one of them would hurt either you or me. Besides, it would be cowardly work to let Mr. Harland fight it out by himself—and when he is ill, too. No, no, I must be off directly. Good-bye, Marian! Good-bye, Carry! Why, Master Richard, what are you up to now?" for Richard came into the room with his cloak and hat on.

"I am going with you, Philip."

"Nonsense! I would not have you with me for the world! Stay with Marian, and take care of her."

"Marian is quite safe; the men are sure not to come here. Please, Philip, I must go with you."

"No! no! good-bye; thank you all the same, my little hero. 'He who fights and runs away, may live to fight

another day,' " said Philip, whistling the tune as he hurried out of the door.

But when the door was closed behind him, Philip looked very grave and sad. It would not have done to let Marian know what he thought of the matter, and he had put the best face upon it that she might feel the less uneasy.

But there would be rough work before the night was over, he felt quite sure of that. Philip was not afraid of the mob ; and, at any other time, a brush with danger would have made his pulse beat with pleasurable excitement ; but not under such circumstances as these, which threatened his employer, Mr. Harland, with loss of property, perhaps even of life, for a mob has little respect of persons when its blood is up. And then what a train of evils would be left behind ! As Philip thought this, he quickened his pace ; but he had not got out of reach of home, when he became conscious of a pitter-patter of quick footsteps behind him, and then a little hand was put into his.

" I could not help it, Philip ! I must come with you, and Marian says I may."

" But, Richard, it is really very naughty ! Now, do go back. Do not you hear what a noise the mob is making ? A mob is a terrible thing, Richard ; it is worse than the dragon we were reading about the other day."

" I am not afraid of anything when I am with you, Philip," said Richard, looking up into his brother's face with such simple love and trustfulness, that Philip could not help giving way. " Besides, the dragon was killed in the end, you know," said he triumphantly.

" Ah, Richard ! I see how it is ; you want to be a hero.

Well, come along then ! I suppose in this, as in everything else, we must push together ! ”

“ O yes ! do let us push together ! ” repeated Richard, hurrying along by his brother’s side ; “ I am not frightened the least bit in the world ! ”

“ Hark ! there they are in the market-place. I wonder whether they will attack Mr. Harland’s warehouse or his house ? ”

They stood still and listened. They could distinctly hear the voice of Mr. Sparks haranguing the mob. And then another voice was raised—whose could it be ? It must be Fred’s—and it struck a sensation of horror into Philip’s heart. There seemed to be a diversity of opinion amongst the crowd, and the mass of people was swayed to and fro like the sea in a tempest. Then there were shouts, and yells, and vociferations, and again the mob was in motion. It was coming on towards Mr. Harland’s house.

“ Let us make haste ! ” said Philip, hurrying forward : “ are you not frightened now, Richard ? ”

“ No, Philip, not the least—only lest you should get hurt,” said the child, looking up with the same affectionate confidence.

“ You see, Richard, this comes of trying to govern men by force. What rule is it, now, that we ought always to act upon, and that ought to be put in practice between masters and men, and brothers and sisters, and everybody in fact ? You know, do not you ? ”

“ O yes, I know—it is to love each other, and to do as we would be done by—as it tells us in the Bible. I do not think there would be any riots then ; would there, Philip ? ”

“ No, dear ; but it can never be till that happy time is

come when the lion is to lie down with the lamb, and wars are to cease. Till then, Richard, we should try to put down discord, and bring peace with us wherever we go."

"Yes, I know; but you cannot make peace to-night, Philip, can you?"

"I hardly know yet; I mean to try what I can do."

This little conversation was strangely out of harmony with the scene around. It was a dark night; neither moon nor stars were to be seen; but great lowering clouds were driving hurriedly across the sky, and the wind shrieked, and howled, and seemed to share in the general disquiet.

The mob had turned down the street leading to Mr. Harland's house, and were coming on with all their passions excited to the utmost. There they were, jostling each other, treading on each other's heels, uttering fierce imprecations, and brandishing whatever weapons they could lay their hands on.

Mr. Harland, the author of all this tumult, had been struck down by sudden illness. It had seized him in the midst of his children's bickerings, and the rumours of the approaching storm; but he was now totally unconscious of what was passing around him. Everything had been done that medical skill could do, but it seemed of no avail; death had already set his mark upon the haggard careworn features.

Charlotte was crouching in a corner of her father's room, too terrified and unnerved to render any assistance, and Robert stood at the door, distracted with alarm at his own personal danger, and at the rude noises which forced their way into the sick chamber.

"O Philip, Philip! save us, save us!" cried he, as

Philip ascended the staircase ; " use your influence ! speak to them ! "

" I will do what I can ; but how is your father ? Can I see him ? Can I speak to him ? "

" He will not hear you—he cannot speak. He has had a fit. The doctor says he may not live an hour. O Philip, do not delay ! Hark, they are upon us now ! They are flinging stones at the windows ! " and Robert shuddered, and leaned on Philip for support.

" Be calm, Robert, and all will go well. God is above us," said Philip solemnly ; " but I cannot make terms with these men on my own authority."

" Make whatever terms you please. I am next in authority to my father, and give you full permission," said Robert hastily.

" And you pledge yourself to keep those terms," returned Philip.

" Yes, until the danger is over. The soldiers have been sent for. If we can only hold out until they come, we shall be safe."

" But after the danger is over, do you pledge yourself to keep those terms ? I will not be a party to anything that is not strictly truthful and honest."

Robert was silent a moment. Then starting with alarm at the noise of the mob outside, " O Philip, go ! go ! make any terms you please. They will have the house upon us if you delay."

" But you must give me first a written promise, that, in your father's stead, you will agree to certain terms, and pledge yourself to keep them."

" How can you be so tormenting when a moment's delay may ruin us ! "

"A moment's delay *may* ruin you," said Philip, drawing him into a room close by, and laying pens and paper before him.

"I hate having to make terms with the rascals; and if you were generous, you would not force me into it!" cried Robert angrily, and scowling deadly hatred at Philip.

"If I could trust your word I would not," said Philip quietly.

"You shall answer to me for that! it is as good as calling me a liar!" exclaimed Robert, gnawing his pen with vexation.

"With all my heart, when the danger is over," returned Philip, who stood on the opposite side of the table, looking the very picture of calmness and self-possession.

"Well, there it is then!" and Robert scrawled a few words, and flung the paper from him.

Philip seized the paper, and flew to the drawing-room, the windows of which were already being smashed to atoms. He raised the sash, and without a moment's hesitation stepped out upon the balcony.

The yells of the mob were fearful, and the flinging of stones and every missile that hands could be laid upon, made Philip's position exceedingly dangerous. One of Mr. Harland's own workmen had brought a ladder, and had mounted nearly to the balcony. Philip knew him well, and laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"Michael!" said he—"Michael!"

"What! is it you Mr. Philip? Give over flinging of stones, can't you?" cried he, turning round, and shouting with the voice of Stentor, catching at the same time a stone in his hand that must otherwise have struck Philip in the face.

"I want to speak to them, Michael."

"You had best go in, sir! you'll be hurt *else*. Their blood's up. It is not you they want, sir."

"But I will not go in! I must speak; so just use your influence to get me a hearing, my good Michael—you all know I am the poor man's friend!" cried Philip, in a loud voice.

"O yes!" shouted a dozen voices; "go in! go in!" cried a dozen more. "We don't want to hurt you—it's Mr. Harland we want! Down with the tyrant! bread for our children!" were the tumultuous cries that were raised from every part of the crowd.

"You *shall* have bread," cried Philip loudly, "and if it is Mr. Harland you want, he is ill—he has had a fit—he is dying! Fie upon you! you would not disturb a man in his last moments!"

A murmur of surprise, not unmixed with horror, ran through the crowd. Philip had done well to put this piece of intelligence first. It was an event not one of them had reckoned upon, and it took their resentment, as it were, by storm. Even a mob will hardly care to assault a dying man.

"It is not true: he is gammoning you!" shouted a voice that Philip recognized as Mr. Sparks's.

"Fling a stone and silence him!" cried another that Philip knew to be Jem's.

"Hold back! let us hear what he has to say! Mr. Philip would not tell a lie!"

"What's that about Mr. Harland? Serve him right, anyhow!"

"Sparks for ever! Liberty and bread!"

"You shall have both," cried Philip; "I have full power to tell you that Mr. Harland will give you four days' work a week."

"Hurrah! hurrah! that's right!"

"So he has given in—the snivelling coward!"

"It's false! it's false! he only says it to deceive you!" cried Mr. Sparks.

"Did I ever deceive you?" asked Philip.

"No, no! Mr. Philip for ever—the poor man's friend!" shouted the fickle crowd.

"And more than that," cried Philip, in a loud clear voice, that was distinctly heard by every one,—“more than that, I have to warn you that the soldiers have been sent for; they are close at hand, and will be upon you directly. Now, as you have got what you wanted, I put it to you, as sensible men, whether you had not better go quietly home before any mischief happens to you.”

At the word "soldiers," a feeling of alarm ran like wildfire through the mob, and they began to waver and give back.

"It's false! and we are a match for them if they do come!" cried Mr. Sparks.

"Yes, yes! who's afraid?" shouted Jem.

But Philip's words had evidently a great effect. The mob left off throwing stones, and looked one at the other, as if undecided what to do. Some listened, and even fancied they could hear the tramp of the horses' feet. Those on the outskirts of the crowd fairly took to their heels and ran off, while the most daring were seized with a panic, and began to give way.

Mr. Sparks raised his voice, and tried to rally them.

"What! are you going to turn cowards? He only says it to frighten you. On, on! down with the tyrants!"

"No, no! Mr. Philip is right; we had best go home!" cried one.

"Home, home! and four days' work!" shouted another.

"Home, home! the soldiers are coming!" was echoed by a third; and Mr. Sparks's voice was drowned in "Hurrah for Mr. Philip! Four days' work! Hurrah for Mr. Philip!"

It was Sparks *versus* Philip, and again Philip was fated to have the best of it.

"That young fellow is always to be our destruction!" said Mr. Sparks to Jem, clenching his fist with rage.

"I told you all along he was more than a match for us. Philip knows how to hit the right nail on the head. But come, let us be off before the soldiers are here to make mincemeat of us."

"Well, now, I may as well take this ladder on my back, and be off too," said Michael. "Come, my young gentleman, backwards or forwards, which you please."

These words were addressed to a figure muffled up in a cloak, and who stood on the ladder behind him.

"Forwards, if you please; I wish to speak to Mr. Philip."

"Come along with you, then!" and Michael stepped on to the balcony to let the stranger pass; then, sliding down the ladder, he stood waiting at the bottom till the colloquy should be over.

"Philip!" said the stranger, gnashing his teeth, "you have disappointed me of a great revenge! Did not I say I

would never enter this house again until I could pay them off with interest?"

"I know nothing of your sayings and doings, Fred," replied Philip calmly and sadly. "Thank heaven, I have saved you from the commission of a hideous crime! Your father is dying! Are you a son, or, I was going to say, a fiend?"

"I am what they have made me," said Fred, with a mocking laugh, and uncovering his face, "Look at me!"

"I see you are fearfully altered," said Philip, in a tone of compassion; "the 'wages of sin is death,' and you will find it so. But, Fred, there is time for repentance. God is ever merciful, and no one need despair. Go to your father's bedside, and at least close his eyes in peace. Be reconciled to your brothers and sisters,—there can be no more suitable time than this."

"No, no! I will not be reconciled—I hate them, Philip! There is no love to draw us together; and love, they say, is stronger than death. Death can do nothing. Let him die!" said Fred, wildly and recklessly.

"Again, Fred, I say, come home! Under any circumstances, come home!"

"Yes, I should if it were such a home as yours, where kind affections, like so many guardian angels, stand about the door to keep off every evil. I would come then. But there is nothing in our house to make a home of. Besides, I mean to be revenged!"

"O Fred! what can I say to you, if you talk of being revenged now?" said Philip in a tone of distress.

Just at this moment, Richard, who had been sent to inquire how Mr. Harland was, came back.

"O Philip, Philip!" cried he, bursting into tears, "the doctor says he will die! He keeps calling 'Fred, Fred!' every minute, and they do not know what to do to quiet him."

"There!" said Philip, taking Fred by the hand; "you cannot refuse. Go, Richard, and whisper to Mr. Harland that Fred is coming."

Mr. Harland was now quite sensible. It was the clear burning up of the lamp of life ere it sank down and expired. But in the near approach of death, the arbitrary will gave way, and the longing for his children's love was too strong for his feeble energies to repress. All their bickerings and heart-burnings—all their evil tempers and angry words—were forgotten in the one desire to receive from them some token of endearment—some sign of their affection. But, alas! affection could not spring up in a moment. There might be sorrow and remorse, but affection had no part in the tears of those who gathered round his bed, and smoothed his dying pillow.

"Children, come nearer to me! I want to feel you—I want to hear you speak to me."

"We are here, father—we are here," said Charlotte, bending over him.

"I want—where is he—Fred! will no one fetch him back? I cannot die in peace unless he comes."

"Fred is coming," whispered Richard, going gently up to Mr. Harland's bed.

"When, when? Oh, it will be too late! Do not deceive me, child. Who told you he was coming?"

"Philip—and Philip always speaks the truth."

"If he is really coming, I shall go," muttered Robert, scowling at Richard as he had done at Philip.

"And I shall not speak to him," said Charlotte resolutely.

"Come, come; do not tremble!—lean on me. Why, you are quite overcome," said Philip kindly, as he conducted Fred towards his father's room.

"Yes, but not with the feelings you imagine," said Fred bitterly; "THEY will be there."

"And who are *they*?" asked Philip, trying to speak cheerfully!

"Robert and Lotte. Oh, how I hate them—hate them—hate them!" and Fred stamped with his foot as though he would have ground them to powder.

"Ah, the old story! I can do nothing here," said Philip mournfully.

They entered Mr. Harland's room. Fred drew himself up, and put on an air of defiance. Robert glared at him with fear and hatred; and Charlotte turned her back upon him, and walked deliberately to the window.

"Who is it?" asked Mr. Harland, in a tremulous voice.

"It is Philip, sir," said Philip, going softly up to him. "O my dear master!" added he affectionately, as great tears coursed each other down his cheeks.

"God bless you, Philip!" said Mr. Harland, grasping his hand; "but, Philip, you promised me that Fred should come."

"Fred is come—he is here," said Philip soothingly, and beckoning to Fred to approach.

"Fred!" cried the sick man, raising himself up with sudden energy, and trying to embrace him,—“Fred! I knew you would come—I could not die until I had seen

you! You will be kind to them, Fred, for my sake—they will have no one but you—speak to me—say that you will——”

“What can I say, father?” said Fred, taking his father’s hand in his.

“Say you will—let them come nearer—Robert! Charlotte! where are you?”

“They are here, sir; they are here!” said Philip, with great tenderness.

“Well let them,—I want to join their hands,”—and he made a feeble effort.

“O, do it—do it!” cried Philip, with tears of anguish; “he is dying—let him die in peace.”

“I will not do it,” said Fred, drawing back.

“Nor I,” said Robert.

“Nor I,” said Charlotte; and they all three exchanged looks of defiance and ill-will.

“What! in the presence of death? O my God! canst Thou not soften these hard hearts?” cried Philip, sinking on his knees, and covering his face with his hands.

But this last act of unnatural hatred was lost on Mr. Harland. He sank back exhausted on his pillow; there was a momentary struggle, and the restless spirit had departed!

Philip rose, and gently closed his eyes,—who shall say it was in peace?

CHAPTER XVI.

"But she will admit me, I am sure; there can be no doubt of that."

"I don't know what to say to it, miss," returned Sally, who was holding the door in her hand, and regarding Lilla Wilkinson with anything but an encouraging face; "she has been in bed ever since till to day, the fright gave her such a turn; and may be, she might not be pleased, being as the doctor told me I wasn't to let anybody in."

"Never mind the doctor. I must and will come in. I can answer for her being glad to see me, and that it will not do her a bit of harm."

"Well, miss! it is not for me to keep out such as you; but you must please to make it good with Master Philip; he charged me, for my life, to do as the doctor told me."

"I can easily do that," replied Lilla, hastily.

"Is that you, Miss Wilkinson?" cried Carry, coming to the top of the stairs, and then running down. "I am so very glad!" and she threw her arms round Lilla's neck.

"Why, Carry, what is the meaning of all your pretty roses being gone?" asked Lilla, kissing her affectionately.

"O, it is because I have been so unhappy! Marian has been very ill indeed, and has kept her bed two whole days, and I have been nursing her."

"I should think you would make a famous little nurse,"

said Lilla, kindly. "But now I will set you at liberty, shall I?"

"I do not wish to be set at liberty, thank you. But you cannot think how frightened we were about Philip; it was *that* made Marian ill. If anything *had* happened to him——" and Carry stopped, and the tears came into her eyes.

"But nothing did happen to him, you see," said Lilla, cheerfully.

"Was it not very brave of him, Miss Wilkinson, to go and speak to the men while they were throwing stones at the windows?"

"Very brave indeed, Carry!"

"And Richard says he was not at all frightened: but then he never is at anything. I do not think there are many people in the world like Philip; do you, Miss Wilkinson?" asked Carry, as she and Lilla went hand in hand upstairs.

"No, dear, I do not think there are."

"Everybody loves Philip!" cried Carry, exultingly; "you do, do you not, Miss Wilkinson?" and she looked up into Lilla's face.

"I—I—— But, come now, Carry, you are sure Marian will like to see me," stammered Lilla, blushing like a rose.

"Yes, that she will! She is in the drawing-room, lying on the sofa. We do not often sit in the drawing-room; but Philip said it would be so nice and quiet for her. Philip is such a good nurse, Miss Wilkinson; and Marian says I am too," added Carry. "Do you know, I have not played at anything for nearly a week!"

"Wonderful!—quite wonderful! I will put that down in my note-book," said Lilla, laughing.

"But, then, I could not bear to play while Marian was ill," said Carry, thoughtfully.

They now entered, the drawing-room, where Marian was lying on the sofa. The alarm into which she had been thrown, on the night of the riot, had been quite too much for her. The idea of Philip being exposed to danger, and the suspense she had been in until he returned, had caused a slight attack of fever, from which she was only now recovering. She looked very pale and thin, and as if it would take some care and nursing to make her as well and strong as she was before.

"My dear Marian," said Lilla, embracing her affectionately, "you see even old Sally could not keep me out. But was he not a hero, Marian?" added she, proudly—for Carry had left her at the door, and Lilla could speak out plainly—"was he not a hero?"

"But, Lilla, what a risk he ran!" replied Marian, trembling at the thought; "only think, if anything had happened!—if he had been——" And she burst into tears.

"Come, Marian, this is almost weak of you!" said Lilla, with mingled tenderness and exultation. "Think what might have happened, but for him. Think how well and nobly he played his part! We heard it every word. You cannot be too proud of such a brother!"

"Yes; but, Lilla, our hearts are so bound up together, that, while he was playing the part of a hero, I was suffering mortal agony!" said Marian, shuddering. "I shall never forget the misery of that night!—never! never!"

"But you would not have kept him back,—you would

not have had him leave that poor dying man to the mercy of a mob? The papers give an account of it; I have brought one with me, for you to look at."

"No, thank you," said Marian, turning away; "I would not live that night over again; I would forget it if I could! Thank Heaven, he is safe! my dear, dear brother! I cannot describe to you the sensation I felt when I held him in my arms, and knew that he was come back safe and sound!" and Marian again burst into tears.

"And I felt so proud and happy! I have not shed a single tear. I only thought how good and noble he was, and how I would try constantly to—to——" and Lilla stopped abruptly.

"O yes, good indeed!" said Marian, who was just now too much occupied with Philip to think of anything else; "nobody knows how good he is! He has been father, and brother, and everything to us. I may well tremble, Lilla, if any danger threatens Philip."

"So you may, dear. I know Philip is excellence itself," said Lilla heartily. "Time was when I used to talk of people being stupidly good; I have found out, now, what it is to be good without being stupid. But Philip is out of danger, so you need not cry about it," added she, cheerfully.

"I will try not to cry any more. I am thoroughly ashamed of myself," said Marian, rousing herself. "There, you see, I am going to behave better. And how is your uncle, Lilla? and how kind it is of you to come!"

"Not so kind as selfish of me. I wanted to see you so terribly. For the last three days I have been to the door to inquire after you; but my design of getting in was frustrated by Sally and the doctor. However, I have contrived

it at last, and I hope I shall not do you any harm. People tell me I am such a chatterbox," added Lilla sighing.

"Not since you have taken to reading Macaulay's 'History of England,'" said Marian, archly.

"O Marian! do not remind me of that. It was very silly of me; but, after all, *you said it*; I did not," returned Lilla, tying the strings of her hat in a great hurry.

"Do not go. I have hardly seen you yet. Yes, I did say it; but it was the truth, Lilla, was it not?"

"It is quite right that I should try and improve my mind," said Lilla, evasively; "but I am forgetting my roses—see, I have brought you some roses. They are almost the last. May I arrange them for you?"

"Thank you, dear, I should like it very much. But, Lilla, have you finished Macaulay?" asked Marian, pertinaciously.

"Not quite; Philip has not brought me the last volume yet," said Lilla, bending over her flowers, and looking almost as rosy as they did.

"How often does Philip bring you the last volume?" asked Marian, smiling.

"Now you are laughing at me, Marian. It is very unkind of you."

"No, I am not. I am as grave as a judge. I merely asked for information."

"Well, then—but I need not tell you how many times he comes," said Lilla, saucily, and with a toss of her pretty graceful head.

"How tired you must be of him!"

"Tired! O Marian, after all you have been saying about him!"

"But sisters are apt to be partial, you know. I do not

expect you to take the same interest in him that I do," said Marian, with pretended simplicity.

"I do take an interest in him," said Lilla, earnestly, "quite as deep an interest as you do, Marian—perhaps deeper."

"Dear me! what a happy man Philip must be! He ought to be very much obliged to you," said Marian, laughing, and looking uncommonly mischievous.

"I love him with all my heart!" exclaimed Lilla, rising, and pushing away her flowers. "If I loved him before, I love him twenty, O twenty thousand times better now! I think there is nobody like him in the world. But, Marian, why do you laugh?"

"Dear, dear Lilla! do go on," said a voice behind her.

"Heyday! what is all this about?" said another.

It was Philip who spoke first, and Mr. Wilkinson who spoke last, for they had both entered the room precisely in time to hear Lilla's last speech.

"O uncle! what shall I do? I did not know——" and Lilla, blushing scarlet, ran to her uncle as if for protection, and hid her face on his shoulder.

"You need not be ashamed, my pet," said he, tenderly, and drawing her closer to him, "and you need not shake like an aspen-leaf. There is no disgrace in loving a brave lad like Philip. I have seen how it was all along."

"If Miss Wilkinson would allow me,—if I might just tell her what delight those few words have given me," cried Philip, his face radiant with joy, "and how my whole life——"

"O yes, yes! you may say it another time," interrupted Mr. Wilkinson; "you and I have a little business to settle

first. Come, my darling, lift up your head, I want to ask Miss Woodford how she is, before the doctor comes and sends us all to the right about."

Lilla raised her head, blushing and agitated, and looked up timidly, still clinging to her uncle. But her eyes met Philip's, and the expression of devoted affection that beamed from them, more than reassured her. And then he took her hand, and drew her from her uncle, with an air that seemed to say, "I am your protector now," and began a few hurried words, Marian talking to Mr. Wilkinson, all the while, as fast as she could. There was no time to say much, nor was there any need. They were young, they loved each other, and life lay all before them. Never did a more golden ray of hope play round two youthful faces than round theirs as they whispered those few words of love, the first and the sweetest they had ever spoken.

Then Lilla put on her hat, and went off, with Richard and Carry, to look at the gold and silver fishes in the tank, while Mr. Wilkinson and Philip closeted themselves in the breakfast-parlour, and proceeded to business.

"Well, Philip, and what is to be done now?" asked Mr. Wilkinson, as he stood before the empty fireplace, with his hands behind him.

"I hardly know, sir. Mr. Harland's death will make a material change in my prospects."

"Of course you do not wish to leave South Street," said Mr. Wilkinson, with a mischievous smile.

"I never had any great attachment to South Street, sir," replied Philip, smiling too.

"Indeed! I thought you were quite in love with your present employment."

"No, sir, never!" cried Philip, energetically.

"But it is a profitable one, and very likely to lead to your making a fortune."

Philip was silent.

"Mr. Harland made a fortune out of it. Now as to the scheme of your being an architect——"

Philip's face brightened, and his eyes glistened, as they always did when the scheme of his being an architect was mentioned.

"It certainly might turn out a profitable speculation in the end."

"O yes, I am sure it would!" cried Philip, eagerly.

"But there would be a greater risk about it. Unless a man has talent, he can never rise in the profession. He can only fill the world with hideous and commonplace designs. It would be better to keep in South Street than do that."

"But I *would* rise in the profession, and my designs *should not* be commonplace," cried Philip resolutely.

"I do not think they would," said Mr. Wilkinson changing his tone. "I think you have a decided talent, and very praiseworthy it has been of you to put your inclination on one side, and take up an immediate duty. But the duty has come to an end, and again two paths are open before you—which do you choose?"

"O, to be an architect!" cried Philip, impetuously, and out of the fulness of his heart.

"Well, then, you *shall* be an architect," said Mr. Wilkinson, shaking him by the hand. "If the wish had been a mere boyish whim, you would not have clung to it so pertinaciously. Dame Nature speaks in you, I suppose," added

he, laughing, "and she must have her way. How should you like to be articted to me?"

This was Philip's cherished dream—the most intense desire of his heart—and the thought of it made every pulse in his body beat tumultuously. He fancied Mr. Wilkinson was joking, and looked incredulously at him.

"I am quite in earnest," said Mr. Wilkinson, gravely. "Should you like it?"

Should he like it? What a question to put to Philip! As if he would not jump at the slightest hint of such a thing! As if his beautiful idea would not then burst forth, and his castle in the air be built up. As if—but no matter about that! Lilla should be proud of him by-and-by!

There was but a single impediment in the way of all this happiness, and that was one hard stubborn fact, which remained the same as ever. The three hundred pounds Mr. Harland had talked about,—it would be as difficult to raise them now as it was then; and Philip coloured, and hesitated, and hardly knew what reply to make.

But Mr. Wilkinson soon set his mind at rest.

"Your services will be of some value to me, and I am willing to receive you as an assistant," continued he. "For the time being, you shall have the same salary as you are having in South Street. Will that content you?"

"O sir! O Mr. Wilkinson! how can I express my thanks?"

"There is no need for thanks; only go on as well as you bid fair to do, and your castle in the air will be finished, one of these days. It was your sister Marian who first interested me in your behalf. I shall never forget that

bitter morning, when she made her way through the snow up to our house. It was not fit to turn a dog out!"

"I should not have let her do it, if I had been at home. Her health was far too precious to be risked in that manner," replied Philip, warmly.

"And then to see how she hugged your folio of drawings, and how prodigiously clever she thought them!" continued Mr. Wilkinson, laughing good-humouredly. "I believe I struck a chill into her heart, colder than the snow, when I told her they were full of faults."

"You were very kind to look at them, sir, and to forgive Marian taking such a liberty. I can never regret her visit, since it has been productive of so much good to us," said Philip, heartily.

"And to poor little Lilla, eh?" returned Mr. Wilkinson, archly. "She would not have read Macaulay's 'History of England' but for you, Master Philip. I am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken to improve her mind."

Philip turned quickly away, and walked to the window. He did not like jesting on so tender a subject.

"Well, well, to change the topic, what a sad thing this is about poor Mr. Harland!"

"It is, indeed, sir. For the last several weeks he has looked terribly pale and fagged," said Philip, coming back from the window. "I dare say he felt more anxiety than he chose to confess."

"Very likely. He was a proud arbitrary man,—though one does not wish to speak of his faults now he is gone," returned Mr. Wilkinson. "He has left a strange turbulent set behind him. I wonder what will be done with them. Of course, you will be at the funeral to-morrow?"

"I intend to be, certainly. His workmen have signified their wish to follow in procession."

"What! the fellows who broke his windows?"

"You must not judge them too harshly, sir. They were pushed on by a Mr. Sparks, whose tongue is enough to set a nation on fire. Happily he was taken up, and safely lodged in gaol, as one of the ringleaders of the mob."

"I am glad to hear it. He is a dangerous fellow, and I fancy has been in more riots than one."

"The men are very sorry for what they have done," continued Philip; "they seem to think of nothing but how to make it up. It would do your heart good to see them come, by twos and threes, entreating permission to carry their poor master to his grave. I believe there is a great deal of good feeling amongst them, though, with Mr. Sparks at their head, one should hardly have given them credit for it."

"I think there is some good in everybody, Philip, if we only knew the corner cupboard in their hearts where they keep it. People use the wrong key, and then the lock is apt to go rusty, and get out of order. But where is my niece, I wonder? May I trouble you to fetch her?"

"Certainly, with pleasure!" And away went Philip, forgetting everything else in a moment.

Mr. Wilkinson laughed; and taking up a newspaper, settled himself to read it. He did not expect Philip back in a hurry, though the tank with the gold and silver fishes in it was not more than a hundred yards' distance; nor was he surprised at seeing Carry and Richard come running in by themselves, and go upstairs to Marian. This was perfectly

natural; and Mr. Wilkinson read on at his paper with great interest.

Half an hour elapsed before Philip and Lilla came in, though it seemed to them only five minutes. It had seemed much longer to Mr. Wilkinson, in spite of his newspaper; but he had been young himself once, so he made no remark. He only laughed good-humouredly, put on his hat, and marched off with his pretty niece on his arm.

The moment Mr. Wilkinson was gone, Philip rushed upstairs to Marian, forgetting everything the doctor had told him about her being kept perfectly quiet. He ran up to her, took her in his arms, kissed her again and again, and repeated incoherently—

“O Marian! I am to be *it* at last! I am to be *it* at last!”

“Be what, Philip? Are you out of your mind?” said Marian, trembling, and fluttered, and almost crying.

“Be an architect! O, I forgot! I ought not to have startled you. How selfish and unfeeling I am! But Mr. Wilkinson has offered to take me. Only think of that!” and Philip careered round the room, snapping his fingers, and giving vent to his feelings with as little noise as he could.

“Be an architect? O Philip, is it possible? My dear brother!”—and Marian got up, and threw her arms round his neck—“I am so very, very glad!”

“Yes, but do not cry about it, dear,” said Philip, leading her back to the sofa. “We will sit down, now I have exploded a little, and talk it over quite quietly. I am to be Mr. Wilkinson’s assistant, and have a salary—mind that, Marian; just as much as I am having in South Street. Is

it not grand?—is it not glorious? The spirit is stirred within me when I think about it. I shall succeed, too, Marian—I know I shall. It is the very bent of my mind, the cherished desire of my heart; and we shall have our country-house—see if we do not.”

“Our country-house, did you say, Philip?” cried Carry, who, with Richard, had just come in.

“Yes, Carry; come here—and Richard, too,” said Philip, affectionately. “You love me, little ones, do not you?”

“Love you? I should think we do! you good, naughty, mischievous, tiresome, delightful Philip!” cried Carry, climbing on his knee.

“I should think we do, indeed!” said Richard, climbing on the other knee.

“Well, then, you will be glad to hear of anything that makes me happy,” said Philip, his arms round them both.

“O yes, yes! do tell us?” cried the children joyfully; “what has made you happy, Philip?”

“Why, you know how much I have wished to be an architect,” continued Philip.

“O yes, yes! go on!”

“Well, then, I am going to be one, and hurrah for it!” cried Philip, catching up his hat, and waving it in the air.

“Hurrah, hurrah! O how glad we are! Hurrah, hurrah!” and Carry and Richard danced about, waving their handkerchiefs in the air. “Hurrah, hurrah!” and their voices rose higher and higher; and then they threw themselves on Philip, and kissed, and hugged him, and made such a distraction, that up came old Sally to see what was the matter.

“And one would have thought you’d have known better,

Master Philip, and all of you, than have gone and made such a din as that, and the doctor just been, and ordered her to be kept as still as a mouse! I am quite ashamed of you!"

"Never mind, Sally—it has done me good," said Marian, her cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkling with as pure a happiness as ever mortal tasted,—“I am so much better to-day. I am thinking of coming down to dinner.”

"If ever I heard the like! However, there's the doctor."

"I shall not want the doctor again," said Marian, laughing; "I am cured, Sally—quite cured; so do not talk to me of the doctor any more, if you please."

And certainly Marian was cured, and so the doctor was obliged to admit, the next time he came. And he took all the credit to himself for his skill in pills and powders; but whether this was exactly fair, was a doubtful matter, in the opinion of more persons than one.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was a bleak autumn afternoon. The year was getting old, and the falling leaves, and the moaning of the wind, told that, like many a year before him, his little span of time would soon be ended, and whether for good or evil, for sorrow or for joy, he would give in his tale of days, and weeks, and months.

Upon Mr. Harland's household a terrible calamity had fallen. Death had come, with its ruthless displacing of earthly ties, its confusion, and its gloom. The father had been taken, his place would know him no more, and his children were left alone—alone, because each stood apart from the other—there was no link between them—no union of loving hearts—and in this bitterest of trials, they could not even weep together.

It is a bleak autumn afternoon, and the last solemn rite is about to be performed, and the whole family have assembled. Fred is there, and Robert, and Charlotte, and the little ones; but they still stand apart, and if words are exchanged, they are nothing more than frigid civilities; and if fierce passions are hushed, it is only in the awful presence of Death. Let those cold remains be carried to the tomb—let the shutters be unclosed, and the stream of light and life let in once more, and the demon of strife will come forth again, and the battle rage all the fiercer, it may be, for the momentary pause.

Philip, in the warmth and simplicity of his heart, had

hoped for better things. He had thought that surely now, over this opening grave, breaches would be healed, and a better life would begin; that not the hardness and estrangement of years could resist such an appeal as this. But Philip was mistaken. The principle of hate was stronger than he imagined. There was no touch of softness or reconciliation; not even when they advanced to take their last look at the departed; not even when they followed the mournful procession to the tomb; not even when they gathered round the grave, and the solemn words were pronounced, "dust to dust, ashes to ashes." Fred and Robert stood apart even here, and Charlotte apart from them. There were no looks of sympathy, no hands clasped in each other's, no clinging of the weak to the strong, no affectionate whispers, no tears in common. For love is stronger than death, and love was absent, and there could be no relenting!

The service was ended. Priest and mourners had departed; and the orphan group were again assembled in their own home, and light was let in, and things looked the same as usual.

Fred sat by himself, sullen and gloomy; his brothers and sisters had hardly spoken to him, or he to them. Indeed, they seemed as if they were bent on showing him that his presence there was only by sufferance, and that, when the occasion was over, the sooner he was gone the better.

Philip was still present, and a brother of Mr. Harland's, who had come to pay the last tribute of respect to his deceased relative. There was also Mr. Simpson, the legal adviser of the late Mr. Harland; and when tea was over, and the servants had retired, it was expected he would produce the will, and read it.

Every one felt interested in the reading of the will. Charlotte roused herself to pay attention, though she did not suppose her father's death would make the least difference in her position, or, if any, that it would give her more liberty. Robert drew near to the lawyer, and Fred rose, and came and stood by his side, while their uncle eyed the parchment in Mr. Simpson's hand with an eagerness the occasion hardly seemed to demand.

Then Mr. Simpson put on his spectacles and began to read.

"Why, that is dated twenty years ago!" interrupted Charlotte.

"Twenty years ago!" echoed Robert. "What are you thinking of, Mr. Simpson? There must be a will of later date than that."

"Twenty years ago! Then it is as I suspected. I thought I knew that strip of parchment the moment I saw it," cried their uncle.

"Read on! read on!" said Fred hastily.

"To say the truth, Mr. Fred, this will concerns you and nobody else," said Mr. Simpson. "At the time it was made, you were the only child. Your father, Mr. Harland, had an illness, and wished to settle his affairs. He sent for me, and I drew up this will, under his direction, which bequeaths the whole of the estate to you on your coming of age——"

"I came of age six months ago!" cried Fred triumphantly.

"On your coming of age," continued Mr. Simpson, taking no notice of the interruption. "The will runs thus,"—and he read it from beginning to end.

"You were one of the witnesses, sir," added he, turning to Mr. Harland; "do you not remember the circumstance?"

"Perfectly. But I am astounded that my brother should not have made a will since then."

"He must have done — there must be another," cried Robert passionately; "you are mistaken—my father could not—it is quite impossible!"

"Your father was on the eve of doing so," replied Mr. Simpson, "and we have had several interviews on the subject. I had made the rough draft of a will, which was to divide the property equally among you, and submitted it to him, for approval, the very day of his death. I need not tell you in what manner his plans were frustrated. Man proposes, God disposes," added he solemnly.

There was a moment's pause, for every one was struck by the awful lesson conveyed to them in these few words. It was but a moment, and then their thoughts returned, naturally enough, to their relative position.

This version of the will would make a serious change in their fortunes; and so Robert felt, and he looked aghast, while Fred gave a cry of triumph, that had in it something perfectly diabolical.

"I will not believe it!" repeated Robert. "Think again, Mr. Simpson."

"I have had the honour to be your father's legal adviser for thirty years at least," replied Mr. Simpson, "and I do not speak unadvisedly. But you need not be alarmed, Mr. Robert; your brother will no doubt set this will aside, and arrange matters equitably and handsomely. It lies between

brothers and sisters, you know ; so there can be nothing to fear for any of you."

"Come, Fred, my boy, speak up, and tell us your intentions," said his uncle, turning to him.

"I have brought the rough draft of the will I mentioned with me," continued Mr. Simpson, laying a sheet of paper before Fred ; "it is perfectly fair and just, and you cannot do better than carry it out. Indeed, from respect to your father's memory, I feel sure you will make no objection."

Fred took the paper in his hand, and stood eyeing his brothers and sisters with a malicious joy. How he gloried in their humiliation ! How he gloried in Charlotte's agitation, and in Robert's bitter disappointment ! How he rejoiced to think that the power had come into his own hands—that they were all at his mercy—that he could pay them off with interest, and, if he chose, crush them to the very dust ! There was no pity in his heart, no love to restrain the evil passions that had got the mastery. Into that very room he had once come, humbled and with some better feelings awakened within him. But they had scorned those feelings, they had repelled him, they had insulted him, and they must reckon for it now, and a grievous reckoning it would be !

"Do you wish to know my intentions, uncle ?" said he, still holding the paper in his hand.

"Yes ; of course you will not take advantage of your brothers and sisters, and carry out a will your father had no intention should stand good. It is a handsome property, and there is no time like the present ; here am I, and here is Mr. Simpson, to see that all is fair and right. What will you settle upon them ?"

"Nothing whatever!" cried Fred, throwing the paper into the fire, and stirring it round, until every atom was consumed.

"Come, come, Fred—this is past a joke," said his uncle angrily. "It is all very well to make believe, but I am in earnest, and want to hear what you intend to do. Let us begin with Charlotte."

"Yes, let us begin with Charlotte," said Fred; "and as regards Charlotte, the sooner she leaves the house the better. It is mine now. Do you understand that, Miss Lotte?"

"O yes, I understand!" cried Charlotte, tossing her head.

"Mind what you are about," whispered her uncle to her; "he has it in his power to make you a beggar. Go and humble yourself to him."

"What, to Fred? no, indeed, I hate him too much for that!" cried Charlotte passionately.

"Ah! ah! Miss Lotte, I told you the next time I came into this house I would pay you off with interest, and the interest is heavier than you reckoned for."

"Fred, Fred!" said Philip, "the Evil One is at your elbow, tempting you. Resist him, and he will flee from you; give way to him, and you will be a second Cain, with the mark of God's and man's abhorrence upon you. Stay, and think an instant."

"I will not stay! I will not think!" cried Fred, shaking him off. "Look at that sister, and that brother—what do they deserve of me?"

"Mercy and forgiveness, as you yourself hope to be forgiven," replied Philip.

"I will have no mercy! I will have no forgiveness!" cried

Fred, hurried on by his passion till he hardly knew what he said. "Do you hear, Lotte? and you, Robert? I am absolute master—the property is mine—every inch of ground is mine—every sixpence is mine—this house is mine! Go out of it! I hate the sight of you!"

"Fred!" cried Philip, in a tone of horror, "for the sake of your dead father—for the sake of all that is dear and precious to you—for your soul's sake—show some pity, some tenderness towards them! You must have a human heart!"

"Spare your words, Philip," said Charlotte haughtily. "*His* pity, indeed! I scorn it—I would not have it! This is just such an act as might be expected from *him*!"

"Is it, Miss Lotte? But you did not expect how rich I should be," retorted Fred, with a laugh of derision.

Charlotte turned her back upon him, and made no answer.

"As for me," said Robert, snapping his fingers, "I care no more than that, either for him or his money. If he chooses to take our inheritance from us, we can do without it. At all events, he has been kind enough to rid us of his company of late, and that is something to be thankful for."

"You will perhaps have the goodness to rid me of your company, and that very speedily!" cried Fred.

"Just when it suits my convenience to do so, and not one minute sooner," returned Robert, folding his arms, and looking Fred in the face, with an insolent stare.

Philip turned away with an expression of disgust, and was about to leave the room, when his eye fell upon the younger ones, Fanny and Willy, who were looking on in silence and wonder. His heart was moved with pity for

them; and, leading them up to Fred, he made a last appeal in their behalf.

"Here are these little ones," said he, "who have no one but you to protect them. Will you turn *them* out? Their little hands cannot labour—their little feet cannot tread the rough places of the world. Go to him, children; put your arms about him;—if he can resist you, his heart is hard indeed."

"No, I will not go to him! Why did he ever come back?" cried the children in a breath, and breaking away from Philip.

"I cannot believe my senses!" said Mr. Harland, who had been looking on like one bewildered. "What are you made of, Fred—what do you mean?"

"I mean exactly what I say," replied Fred.

"That you are going to turn them out into the street, like dogs?"

"You can word it as you please, uncle. The property is mine by law; here is Mr. Simpson to witness it—he made the will."

"I acknowledge your legal right, Mr. Fred," said the lawyer gravely; "but nothing is more desirable than that the will I have just read should be set aside. Justice loudly demands it, and I cannot believe that you will persist in your cruel and unnatural resolve."

"I have no intention of changing it," replied Fred coolly. "I mean to pay them off with interest, and this is a glorious opportunity. Let them be turned out! it is but fair—they turned me out not long ago!"

"Your own disgraceful conduct turned you out!" said Charlotte, darting at him a vindictive glance.

"And your affection for Jem Franklin and Mr. Sparks!" added Robert, with a sneer.

"Hush, hush! you are only making matters worse," said Mr. Harland; "speak him fair, I tell you, speak him fair; try and say something to conciliate him."

"I will not, for one!" said Charlotte resolutely.

"And I will not, for another!" added Robert.

"What is to be done?" said Mr. Harland to the lawyer.

"Nothing can be done, sir, unless Mr. Fred will listen to reason and common humanity."

"It is quite impossible he can carry out his threat," continued Mr. Harland; "perhaps he will think better of it to-morrow, when he is calm, and this excitement is over."

"No, no! I shall not think better of it," cried Fred; "I have quite decided: they go—this very day—*now!*" added he, fiercely.

"But where are they to go to? You must allow them time to make arrangements," said his uncle.

"I do not care where they go to, or what becomes of them, provided they are out of my sight," said Fred.

"All the world will cry shame on you, Mr. Fred!" said the lawyer.

Fred only replied by a scornful laugh. He seemed as if some demon had possessed him. Fierce hate glared from his eyes and distorted his features. The scene was frightful and beyond description. Robert and Charlotte retorted his words with bitterness, and a passion scarcely less frenzied than his own. Even the voices of the children joined in the tumult. It was as if the very elements of strife were let loose, and permitted to rage without restraint.

Philip quitted the room, and hurried home, to be haunted for many a day by those furious faces. Mr. Simpson followed him, driven out by the violence of the storm. It was a storm that no powers of eloquence, no persuasion could allay. Mr. Harland tried in vain, and then he grew angry, and used reproach, and that made it rage all the fiercer. But it was well for Charlotte and the children that he was present, to take them under his protection. He could not refuse the shelter of his home to those whom one short hour had made homeless, let him disapprove their conduct as he might. He felt more indignation than sympathy, more disgust than compassion; but they must come to him, till something could be done for them.

For Robert he would do nothing. He was not so helpless as Charlotte and the little ones, and he must fight his way as best he could. A little rough weather, his uncle thought, would do him good, and knock the evil tempers out of him. So Robert was turned adrift, and took his departure, hurling defiance at his brother as he went. Charlotte cared little or nothing what became of him, or he of her. The Bundle of Sticks had never been bound together, and now it fell apart, as of its own accord. But it was quickly done; it did not take long to break up the domestic circle. Time might be, when the heart of each would mourn for these broken ties, this desolated home,—but not now. The whirlwind was abroad, and who could hear the still small voice? Natural affection seemed a fiction,—all the endearments of domestic life a chimera. Hate had got the mastery, and must reign, until a stronger than she should come.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FRED was left alone. They had gone with expressions of hatred on their lips ; but still they had gone, and he was left alone, to be the absolute master in his own house, and to enjoy the companionship of his own thoughts.

His thoughts, at first, were triumphant and exulting. Whatever sweets there were in revenge, he tasted them, when the storm was over. He breathed freely, now Charlotte and Robert were, as his uncle expressed it, turned into the street like dogs.

He rejoiced to think he had had the spirit to carry his resolution through,—not to be moved from his purpose by any consideration whatever. It is true, his brothers and sisters made no attempt to move him : they had met hate with hate, scorn with scorn, defiance with defiance. Had it not been so,—had kindness and entreaties been employed, it might have been otherwise. But who ever heard of kindness and entreaties here ?

Fred was determined to enjoy his victory. What was to become of those he had beggared by a single act, never entered into his head. He had but one feeling about them, and that was, joy that they were gone. They could not quarrel with him any more. He could roam through the house, and not fear to encounter unloving faces, or hear harsh, angry words. He went from room to room, and laughed aloud, with a malignant pleasure. How it gratified him to see Charlotte's room empty and in confusion, and

Robert's door wide open, to show that he was gone, and the children's nursery deserted, and their toys still scattered on the floor! They would none of them disturb his peace again. Peace did you say, Fred? What will you know of peace? "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

One room Fred dared not enter; and it was well he did not venture to profane its solemn stillness. If he had, there might have risen, before the eye of his imagination, a pale haggard face, and a plaintive voice might have rung in his ears, "Be kind to them, Fred; for my sake be kind to them; they will have no one but you." And he might have recalled that scene of discord, by the bed of death, and Remorse might have struck her fangs into his heart. Remorse must come at last; Fancy might have heard the rustling of her wings, like those of the Eumenides of old; but the moment to overtake and seize her victim had not come.

Fred returned to the drawing-room. It was getting dark, and the fire had burned low in the grate. He rang the bell, had it heaped high up, and the lights brought, and the curtains drawn. The servants looked at him with astonishment. He did not care,—he only laughed, and prepared to spend the evening gloriously.

He sent for some of his companions. They caroused till morning, and the whole house rang with sounds of wild and boisterous revelry.

Fred rose late, after his first night of triumph. He would have to take the management of his affairs in hand that day. He understood his father's business perfectly, and it would be an occupation for him.

He breakfasted alone; the empty chairs stood by the wall, as a kind of mute reproach to him. He did not care; he went out whistling, as if light-hearted,—for he meant to be happy and enjoy himself, in spite of everything!

Philip was at the warehouse as usual; for he could not break his engagement without a word of warning; and Fred was glad to see him. He liked Philip, and had the greatest respect for him. He had been half afraid he would never come again, and it was with real cordiality that he said,—

“Good morning, Philip. So you have not deserted me.”

“I had occasion to see you on a matter of business,” returned Philip coldly, and without taking his offered hand, “otherwise I should not have been here.”

“Ah, I suppose you are offended with me. I expected that; I shall have plenty of enemies now.”

“You are your own enemy, Fred, and very much to be pitied.”

“Pitied! I am rather to be envied. I mean to lead a rare jolly life, that I can tell you!”

“But do what you will, you cannot quiet the stings of conscience; and no man is to be envied who has a serpent in his bosom.”

“Conscience! O, my conscience will do well enough. But, Philip, what are you intending? Will you stay with me?”

“Not beyond the present week; I am going then to enter on a fresh occupation.”

“O Philip, do not go away! You shall be my partner, if you like.”

"I am much obliged to you, but my plans for the future are arranged," said Philip.

"I see how it is,—you will forsake me like the rest of them. Do you know, all the servants in the house have given me warning. Pleasant, is it not?"

"I am not in the least surprised at it."

"And my uncle says he will cut me entirely. I had such a famous blow-up by the post. And now you are going, and I shall not have one friend left. Never mind, I will try to live without them."

"I had hoped always to be your friend," returned Philip; "but, until that grievous act of injustice has been repaired, there can be nothing in common between us. I must leave you to your own devices."

"I am sorry for it. I like you, Philip. If they had been as kind and good as you are, it would never have happened."

"Have you been kind and good to them, Fred?"

"I cannot say I have; but it would have made no difference. However, they are gone, and I mean to enjoy my liberty. No one has a right to blame me for doing what I choose with my own."

And Fred set about enjoying his liberty in earnest. For some time he led a life of reckless dissipation, and filled his house with boon companions, who feasted at his expense. No one else would associate with him. The old servants of the family took their departure, and his father's friends passed him in the street without speaking to him. In the warehouse no respect was paid him; money kept his workmen together, and money only. He was a marked man; but he set public opinion at defiance; he had his wealth to fling about at plea-

sure, and his triumph to exult in—and let those laugh who win!

He took a pride in driving about in his carriage before the eyes of all men, to show how little he cared for them. He was to be seen everywhere, and at all times and seasons, till he became a very by-word, and his name a term of reproach. But he resolved to fight the battle out with the world, as well as with his own flesh and blood, and to repay her abhorrence of his deed with contempt and indifference.

And yet, beneath this show of indifference, there was a strange restlessness he could not account for. There was a dread of something to come—nay, that was close by him, outside his door, and he must keep his heart well fortified, or it would get within. He must be always in a whirl of business or excitement; he must never be alone: leisure or solitude, either of them, would let the phantom in;—he must hurry along, or it would overtake him. He must keep incessant guard, or it would seize him unawares. He knew not what it was, but he hated the thoughts of it. He hated darkness, lest it should be there, and kept up his carousals till morning light. But his spirits, force them as he might, would flag. He could not laugh at his companions' jokes; they had grown stale with half a year's repetition. He grew weary of dissipation, and his health began to give way;—he became irritable and overbearing;—he tyrannized over his companions till they hated him; and there were feuds and discords even here. They were little disposed to be the victims of his ill-humour and *ennui*. No link of friendship bound them to him, and, one by one, they fell away, and he was left alone. Fred professed not to care, to be glad to be rid of them. He would enjoy himself another

way now this had failed ;—he would return to quieter employments, and regular hours, and his health might perhaps recover.

But his health did not recover, as he thought it would. He was ill, and for some weeks unable to leave his room. His companions were well content that they had left him ; it would not have suited their tastes to dance attendance in a sick-chamber, and they never troubled to inquire how he was. This sickness was a terrible ordeal to Fred. He had never anticipated it ;—he had thought of strong unbroken health, and spirits buoyant enough to carry him triumphantly through. But where were his health and spirits now ?

And in this time of weakness, his enemies closed upon him. He had leisure ; for he was unable to occupy himself as usual. He had solitude ; for, except his servants, no human being approached him. His restlessness increased in proportion to his want of power to indulge it. His melancholy spread itself round him, like a cloud, and there was nothing to dissipate it. A feeling of horrible desolation came upon him—a loneliness that was almost insupportable. The great empty house became his dungeon. He was alone, utterly alone. There was no one to lean upon—no one to share his solitude.

Yes ! there was one to share his solitude,—one who had waited long for entrance ! In the whirl of dissipation he had kept her at bay, but she had overtaken him at last. When his companions had deserted him, and sickness had laid him aside—when the house was silent, and every voice was hushed—then came the spirit of Remorse ! She came like some phantom from the grave, and full as terrible ;—

she stood by his bedside;—she brought back the scenes of the past;—she called the dead from his narrow couch, and caused the haggard face, and plaintive voice, to haunt Fred with fearful vividness;—she woke the slumbering conscience, and bade it ply its whip of scorpions;—she filled his whole soul with agony and dread;—she claimed him as her own;—she would take up her abode with him;—she would stay where he stayed, and go where he went. He could not escape her;—her wings were swifter than the wind, her tooth sharper than a serpent's. Her reign was absolute, and, unless some diviner influence interposed, interminable.

CHAPTER XIX.

DAYS, and weeks, and months! How smoothly do they glide along, when the weather of life is unruffled, and her skies are bright and sunny! when friends are round us, and loving voices are sounding in our ears! But let some crime, or some great sorrow, fling us apart from these, and how heavily they drag! How do we say in the morning, "Would to God it were evening!" and in the evening, "Would to God it were morning!" There is no calm weather for us then,—no sunny sky;—the road we have to traverse lies along a bleak and dreary desert, and we only wonder how we shall ply our way across it.

If it be Sorrow, she may have Religion for her solace, Patience for her helper, and Hope to gild the overhanging cloud. But if it be Crime, Remorse and Dread are her only attend-

ants; the cloud can have no cheering break, and the bleak desert, that stretches in the distance, can lead to nothing but destruction.

With Fred, crime had thrown him apart from his fellows,—crime unrepented of, and unforgiven. It weighed upon his conscience, and his heart, like an intolerable burden. He could never lay it down, and the days, and weeks, and months, dragged heavily enough;—he hardly knew how they passed. He had so far recovered as to leave his room, but he seldom went abroad. If he did, he dreaded to come home again, to that blank solitude. Besides, he was ashamed of his haggard face, and the lines of suffering that sickness and remorse had made. He would have the world still think him happy; he would hide the skeleton that was in his house, and no one should guess at its existence.

But it was weary work that life of isolation! He had no one to love, no one to cling to, or who would cling to him; and there were moments when his heart would yearn, as his father's had done, and as the heart of every human being will do, for affection, for companionship, and for sympathy,—the three richest jewels in the crown of life!

He never roamed about the house as he used to do. The doors of the deserted rooms were shut, and he did not care to open them. He tried to forget that he had any brothers and sisters, and to blot out their images from his memory. But memory was faithful to her trust;—she would bring them before him—Robert, and Charlotte, and the little ones. Where they were gone to, or how the world, upon which he had flung them, had treated them, he knew not. He had heard no tidings of them, and their names had never passed his lips.

The enjoyment of his liberty turned out to be a chimera. It was not liberty to be in bondage to an accusing conscience. He was not master of his own house, though he had swept it clear of all but himself. Remorse was there : she lorded it over him ; she shared his inheritance with him ; and from her there was no escape. Still he had no idea of changing his course, of giving in, or of retracting his injustice. Pride and hate reigned supreme ; and even when hate began to yield to the softening influence of time and absence, pride remained in the field, as strong and as revengeful as ever.

He could not suppose the outcasts would return, even if he invited them, and he was not inclined to try the experiment ; they would only abuse his kindness, and fling scorn and defiance at him, from whatever adverse place his harsh act had driven them to.

And it was harsh, Fred acknowledged that ; but it was the concluding chapter of a series of wrongs and insults to which they had subjected him. If they had tried conciliation, he might not have been able to carry it through. Bad as he was, he had always been susceptible to kindness, and kindness was what he had never received from any one of them.

His father had been dead a year, and it was time that the plaintive voice which had haunted him so long should cease. He had disregarded it, but it still rung on. Go where he would, he could not get out of its hearing. It pleaded with him in his solitude ; it spoke to him from the grave on which the winter snows were falling ;—it was never silent. Resist it as he might, the impression was the same, the words were the same : “Be kind to them, Fred, for my sake ; they will have no one but you !”

They had no one but him. He knew that, and he knew that they must be dependent, if not in want; for the world is pitiless towards those who are thrown upon its mercy. Prosperity can win its smiles, but the child of adversity is roughly trodden beneath its feet.

As the winter came, Fred's sense of loneliness increased upon him, and his burden became almost intolerable. He tried to make some friends, but every one avoided him. They knew, though he did not care to know, the fate of those he had driven out. They cried shame upon him, and he felt abashed, and shrank back again to his solitude.

One night, he was sitting in the drawing-room, listening to the gusts of wind that eddied up the street. The fire burned brightly, and the curtains were drawn, and the tea stood upon the table. He did not touch it. He sat with his face buried in his hands, a prey to his own thoughts.

Suppose he were to yield;—suppose he were to invite them back. "Yes," said the voice of natural affection, "try what conciliation will do; invite them back; fill up these vacant places; be kind to them—they have no one in the world but you."

It was not a familiar voice that prompted him. He had not heard it for many a year,—never since he and Charlotte and Robert were all children together. It struck on some forgotten chord, and gave him a touch of painful pleasure. He liked to hear it, and listened for it to speak again.

But this time it was pride that spoke.

"What! would you humble yourself to *them*? Think how they hated and despised you! Think of the jars and strife of years! Would you bring *that* back?"

And then rose up before him their angry, furious faces,

just as he had seen them last. He heard their bitter taunts, and saw them depart with hate upon their lips. And hate was still in Fred's heart, and the soft touch of natural affection seemed to recoil before it.

"I will not bring them back!" cried he, rising and beginning to pace the room; "I have had enough of Charlotte's ill-nature and Robert's insolence. It was these that drove them out, not I. They should have minded better, and not provoked me beyond endurance. Bring them back! I wonder such a thought should have come into my mind!"

And he sat down, and fell into the old mood again. Another hour passed. He heard nothing but the howling of the wind outside, and the ticking of the clock within. It must be more than an hour that was gone, and he got up to look. But no; Time kept his usual pace, and there were several hours to be ticked off before the day was ended. It seemed an interminable day. What a blank space, with nothing to fill it, lay between him and the night! And yet the night would be no better, with Remorse to haunt him through it. He got up, and went out into the street. The wind was blowing a hurricane, and driving sleet and snow before it. It was a wretched night; not a creature was abroad who could help it. As he hurried along, he glanced into many a house where the fire burnt brightly, and the domestic circle was gathered round it; and caught many a glimpse of home comfort and enjoyment, that made his own position appear more desolate. Why could not he enjoy the same? Why could he not gather up the broken links, and, as Philip said, bring back the olive-branch of peace?

It was Philip's house to which he was going. He did not know whether he should be admitted or not; but this

he knew, that if any kind word ever again greeted his ear, it would be from Philip; if any hand were stretched out towards him, it would be Philip's.

Philip had left him to his own devices, as he said he would; but still he had never passed him in the street without a look of recognition, and he was going to see whether Philip would shut his door against him, as the rest of the world had done. He walked up and down, several times, in front of the house, before he ventured to ring the bell. It reminded him of the evening when he had returned home, when Philip's words had roused some better feeling, and he had resolved to make one effort to redeem the past. A word of kindness might have saved him then—perhaps it might save him now.

Within the house all was cheerful and homelike. Philip and Marian and the little ones were just going to tea, and, after that, to spend one of their pleasant winter evenings. There was Philip's drawing, and Marian's book, and Carry's work and thimble, laid ready on the stand, and the dominoes—for the dominoes were still as popular as ever.

"What a night it is!" said Philip, as he filled the teapot, when Marian had put in the tea; "I should hope no poor wretch is unlucky enough to be out in it."

"But hark! there is some one out in it now," replied Marian—"Who can it be?"

"It was a gentleman," Sally said, as she came up to announce the arrival.

"A gentleman! Mr. Wilkinson, I dare say," cried Philip. "What can bring him here such a night as this? I hope nothing is the matter."

"It isn't Mr. Wilkinson; it's a youngish sort of a

gentleman," replied Sally, as she stood with the door in her hand, "and he didn't give no name."

"Show him in, whoever he is," said Marian.

And Fred *was* shown in. He came in hesitating and abashed, and peered suspiciously round, as if an enemy might have been in every corner.

Philip rose, and looked gravely at him. The injustice had not been repaired;—the empty chairs still stood by the wall. He was surprised to see him, and his countenance expressed it.

Fred returned his look with one of entreaty.

"Do not turn me out, I am so miserable!" cried he; "the loneliness is killing me!"

"We will not turn you out," said Marian, her woman's heart touched, to the quick, by his worn and wretched appearance. "Come and sit down by our fireside—come;" and she drew the easy-chair and placed it for him.

Fred's eye was still fixed on Philip with an expression of uncertainty.

"I cannot shut my door against you," replied Philip gravely; "sit down, Fred."

"But you will not shake hands with me—you hate me, Philip!"

"I hate no one; it is a feeling that has never entered into my heart. But I cannot shake hands—no, I cannot;" and he turned away.

Fred sat down in silence: he did not attempt to talk. His entrance had brought a restraint with it. Carry and Richard eyed him with wonder; Richard drew as near to Philip as he could, and Carry's laughing face was unusually serious.

But the spell did not last long. Silence was the most unpleasant thing that could happen to Carry; and she soon began to chatter, rather timidly at first, and with glances towards the easy-chair where Fred was sitting. Finding he did no one any harm, Carry took courage, and talked away with her accustomed volubility, and when tea was over, she brought out the dominoes, as a matter of course.

"He will not prevent our playing at dominoes, will he?" whispered she to Marian.

"O no!" replied Marian, laughing; "perhaps he will have a game too; ask him."

"I do not like, exactly," said Carry, hanging about her sister.

Fred was not asked to play at dominoes, but he sat and watched the whole process, even to the scramble round the room, and Carry hiding herself under the table. Then came the reading aloud, Richard's red house, painted as large as the paper would allow, and Carry's work, and Philip's drawing. The whole domestic scene was played out just as if Fred had not been there, even to the children having their suppers by the fire, chattering all the time like a pair of magpies.

When the children were gone to bed, Fred still sat on. He felt as if he could not go. Marian laid aside her book, and took up some work, and Philip went on drawing with great diligence.

"I know I ought to go," said Fred, rising; "I have intruded myself upon you long enough; but this is the first pleasant evening I have passed for months and months."

"What are you doing with yourself, Fred?" asked Philip, looking up from his drawing.

"Nothing in particular—I am tired of the business ; I have half a mind to give it up, and go abroad."

"And do you think you shall be any happier abroad than you are at home?" said Philip.

"I do not know; I might try. That house is such a dungeon to me!"

"It is just what you have made it, Fred."

"What could I do?" cried Fred impatiently. "They drove me to it; they hated me, till hate could go no further; it was time we parted."

"And do you never think of them as outcasts and homeless?" returned Philip, looking steadily at him. "You cannot guess their misery. Your very desolation might teach you how hard it is to stand alone."

"It is hard; I cannot do it. I have no one to care for, or who cares for me; and yet I am pining for sympathy. But I might pine long enough ere I could get it from them," said Fred, bitterly.

"They may pine for sympathy as well as you," returned Philip. "Robert and Charlotte, I mean. Do you suppose they can stand alone any more than you can?"

"It is not my sympathy they wish for," said Fred, quickly. "No, no! that is too absurd! If I were to hold out my hand to them, they would turn away from it with reviling."

"Try! only try!" cried Philip and Marian in a breath.

"But if I were to try, and be repulsed? I know them better than you do."

"And suppose you were repulsed," said Philip, "you

would still have repaired the wrong, and might bring peace to your own conscience. It is worth the trial, for you can have no peace till then."

"Why should I repair the wrong?" cried Fred passionately. "They injured *me*—they trampled upon *me*—they scorned *me*! Why should I show them any mercy? When did they conciliate *me*?—when did they show any mercy to *me*? No, no! let them alone! They have only got their deserts!" And Fred took his leave, and hurried home again, his face fierce with the sudden passion that had been roused within him.

But when he got home, a chill sense of loneliness fell upon his heart. Still those vacant chairs, that death-like silence!—still Remorse to stand by his bedside, and the plaintive voice to ring in his ears,—“Be kind to them, Fred, for my sake; they will have no one but you!”

CHAPTER XX.

It was nearly midnight; so said the watch upon the mantelpiece, in a small ill-ventilated room, where a number of young women were at work, and had been since day-break, plying the needle. Rich silks, laces, and artificial flowers lay scattered about, and formed a strange contrast to the humble and slovenly attire of those by whose skilful fingers the various materials were to be shaped into elegance and beauty.

It was Saturday night, and the strongest and most enduring was tired out by the week of toil, and the most light-hearted had begun to heave sighs of impatient weariness.

"How I wish it were twelve o'clock!" exclaimed one. "I could not have got through this week's work, if it had not been for the thought of going home to-morrow. Sundays are delightful days!"

"So they are, Maria," said another. "At all events, one gets a breath of air, and a gleam of sunshine, then. O, I am so tired! How long does it want to twelve? This watch is always slow. Mrs. Perrin puts it back on Saturdays, I verily believe."

"My eldest brother will be home to-night!" cried Maria exultingly. "I should not wonder if he comes to fetch me."

"What so late as this?"

"Never mind; Henry has fetched me home later than this, before now; and we shall have so much to say to each other. He has only to-morrow, and must be back to business on Monday. Come, Miss Harland," added she, turning to a young woman who sat by her side; "you are getting on very badly with that skirt; and, goodness me! if you are not crying over it! A bride's dress! and every tear may take the colour out!"

The slight figure, that stooped from fatigue and failing health, the eyelids swollen with many tears, and the air of patient suffering,—these were not characteristic of Charlotte Harland. But it was Charlotte, humbled and broken down by adversity,—shabby in dress, and with unmistakable marks of poverty upon her.

"I am so miserable!" cried she, throwing the dress from her, with a kind of despair. "You talk of home, and your brothers and sisters, till you drive me mad! I have no home! Where am I to go to-morrow? Sit shivering in the workroom, or roam about the streets, I suppose."

"I did not mean to remind you of your misfortune," said Maria, taking up the dress and beginning to arrange the gathers. "See, you are doing this shockingly! You are putting all the fulness in front, and none behind. You will never make a dressmaker, Miss Harland, as long as you live."

"I am afraid I never shall; and I hope my life will not last much longer," said Charlotte wearily.

"Hush! hush! you should not talk so!" said Maria, taking sundry pins from her mouth, and beginning to regulate the gathers; "there is some pleasure in life for everybody; I am sure there is for me, for all I slave as hard as

any one. There are little loopholes in our prison, through which we can see how bright and pleasant it is outside,—such as Sundays, for instance, when one goes home, and sees one's friends."

"I tell you I have no home, and I have no friends," said Charlotte, half impatiently.

"I am sorry for it. No one ever does any good who has not a home, however homely it may be," said Maria, who had done fixing, and was now stitching away with great good-nature; "the thought of it lies so warm about one's heart. I have six brothers and sisters younger than myself, and it is for their sakes I work so hard. I and my next sister intend to go into partnership, and have a snug little business of our own some of these days."

"I should not mind how hard I worked, if I had a sister, or any one, to love me," said Charlotte mournfully; "but it is so dreary to stand alone in the world."

"So it is; but you must make the best of it. No good ever comes of being downhearted," said Maria. "There! I have finished your work for you. You are saved a scolding, let me tell you, and having it to unpick."

"Thank you; you are very kind. I get on worse on Saturday, I think, than any other day, because you all go home on Sundays, and then I am as good as turned into the streets by Mrs. Perrin."

"It is very bad, I know," said Maria, taking a row of needles from the front of her dress, and sticking them in a needle-book she kept in her pocket; "mother would not have put me apprentice if I could not have gone home on Sundays."

"But I have no mother; I have only an uncle, who does

not care what becomes of me, so long as I am earning a living, and getting what he calls a trade."

"He is quite right there, though it seems rather hard at first," said Maria; "you will be a vast deal better off with a trade than without one; so I advise you to pluck up heart, and not fret about trifles. You have got a famous helper in me, and that's something to be thankful for. I am a first-rate hand,—even Mrs. Perrin allows that," added Maria, as she hurried away.

In another hour the room was deserted, the dresses put by, and the workers huddled together to rest, in a chamber scarcely larger, or better ventilated, than the one they had left. But it did not matter; sleep must come, from sheer exhaustion and fatigue, and for a few hours all was silence and repose.

Charlotte could not sleep: she wept long and bitterly; she wept over the past; she wept for very weariness of life,—a life unblest by a single ray of affection or sympathy. Her heart yearned for these,—yearned as Fred's had done, and did now. Her thoughts of Fred were mingled with tenderness and self-reproach. She would have given worlds to recall the past, to bring back that evening when he came in humbled and prepared for better things. If they had but tried conciliation then! The opportunity was a precious one; but it was gone for ever! The flood of strife and angry passions had broken down that momentary barrier, and carried all before it.

It was too late for conciliation now;—they had driven him at bay, and, like some wild beast, he had turned upon them and destroyed them. They were broken up, and had to brave the world each one alone.

And it was hard work for Charlotte to brave the world alone,—she who had been brought up in the lap of luxury and wealth; but still more painful to think of those severed links that a word of kindness might have gathered up, of a family circle torn apart by discord, and hate, and rage.

There was no hate in Charlotte's heart. Adversity had taught her a wholesome lesson, and time had softened the remembrance of their jars and quarrels. She had never seen any of them since. Robert was somewhere or other, struggling on as she was, and the little ones had been placed, by their uncle, at a school where there were no vacations. She was too proud to make advances,—too proud to write and ask their sympathy. Besides, if she did, she might only meet with a repulse. Her uncle was not very kind to her; he was by no means so rich as her father had been, and he had a large family of his own to provide for. He thought he had done his duty in taking Charlotte to London, and binding her apprentice to Mrs. Perrin. It was a good provision for the future; and for the rest, she was young and strong, and must make her way as best she could.

Poor Charlotte's way was anything but the best. She had, to begin with, no skill, no patience, and no industry. The two last qualities she had in some degree attained, but in the former she was still sadly deficient. She was the blunderer and the scapegoat of Mrs. Perrin's establishment; every one teased and ridiculed her except Maria. Mrs. Perrin incessantly prophesied ill of her, and there seemed no chance of her rising beyond the merest drudge.

She had been with Mrs. Perrin twelve months, and the

hard work and close confinement had caused her health to fail. But there was no alternative; and come what might, she must struggle on without hope or help.

Sunday morning came, and the sleepers roused themselves, and hastened to put on their finery. It was a bright frosty morning, there was something exhilarating in the atmosphere, and they laughed and talked, and made quite merry at the thought of the fine weather and their holiday. They were going to spend it with their friends and relatives, and soon the most loitering had taken her departure, and Charlotte was left alone.

She rose slowly and wearily, and after breakfast was over, prepared for church. She looked tired and ill, but Mrs. Perrin felt no compassion for the unlucky one who had no friends and was a burden on her hospitality, when all the rest were gone. She wanted to entertain her own acquaintance, and take her own pleasure, and could not be expected to care for a moping apprentice, who was, besides, good for nothing, and spoiled everything she touched. So, when the church was closed, Charlotte used to wander about till she was tired, and then go back and sit in the cold deserted workroom, and receive such refreshment as the servant chose to bring her.

On this particular morning she went out feeling more than usually discouraged. Even her Sunday dress was shabby, and as yet, she had earned nothing. Next year she was to have a salary, but Mrs. Perrin never failed to remind her how little she would be worth it.

As she walked along, she was attracted by the sight of a young man on the opposite side of the street, who was looking very intently at her. At first, Charlotte did not

recognize him ; but then her heart beat violently, and she stopped to return his look.

It was Robert ! Should she speak to him or not ? Pride revolted at the concession, but pride had not the mastery now. Another impulse, better and holier, was at work ; a touch of natural affection thrilled through her heart. The sight of a familiar face was dear to her, in that wilderness of London. And a brother's face !—there was something dearer still in that, let him have been as wayward and unloving as he might. O yes ! she would speak to him, or he would be gone, and the opportunity be lost to her for ever !

But see ! he is coming across the street to speak to her. His face is altered ; it is sharp, and thin, and pale ; but it looks kinder. He has been in adversity too, and it has curbed his evil temper, and the sight of a sister's face is dear to him.

Charlotte held out her hand. "Robert !"

Robert took it in both of his. "Lotte, is it you ? I have not seen you for so long. How ill you look ! What is the matter ?"

I am not ill, Robert, but tired and worn. It is hard work being poor, and having to toil for one's bread."

"So it is ; harder for you than for me," said Robert, drawing her arm in his. "Come, I will walk with you—where are you going to ?"

"To church."

"I will go with you."

"Thank you ; that is very kind. I am so glad we have met ; I have thought so much about you."

"And so have I thought about you, but I never could make you out. Where are you?"

"At Mrs. Perrin's. I am learning to be a dress-maker."

"But that is terrible! You surely are not meaning to get a living with your needle?"

"I must indeed, Robert. My uncle will do nothing more for me; I cannot starve."

"I should think not; but why did not you write and tell me?"

"I did not know where you were, and I did not know——"

Charlotte stopped.

"Whether I should answer you, I suppose. Ah, Lotte! we have been sad murderers of our own happiness; I have found that out long since."

"And so have I," replied Charlotte, the tears beginning to flow; "and now our happiness is gone for ever!"

"I hope not quite for ever. But we shall have to fight our way. I am doing more comfortably now. You must come and see where I lodge. It is a poor place, but I shall be very glad to introduce you to it. But do not cry, Lotte, pray do not."

"I cannot help it, Robert. A moment ago I felt quite alone in the world, and now——O, I am so glad I have found you!"

"You are not more glad than I am," said Robert. "Depend upon it, Lotte, there is such a thing as natural affection, after all. My heart has pined after it, till I thought it would have pined itself away."

"And so has mine, and that has been my trouble," cried

Charlotte; "it has broken me down more than the hard work and poverty could do. No one was ever intended to stand alone. The heart must have something to cling to."

"Cling to me, Lotte, I am stronger than you," said Robert, affectionately.

They had now reached the church to which Charlotte was going, and into which numbers were flocking this bright Sunday morning. They entered with reverence and humility. O, adversity had done much!—the pleadings of nature had done much!—time and absence had done much! And these two, who had been arrayed against each other for so long, humbled in spirit, and full of tenderness for each other, knelt side by side in prayer! Even here, union was strength, and their prayers had a double power and energy.

And when the service was over, and they left the sacred edifice, they felt as if each had found a treasure—a treasure more precious than gold or gems—the treasure of a brother's and a sister's love. What can compare with it?

Charlotte walked home with her brother, and a poor little home it was. A strange contrast with his father's luxurious house; but not stranger than the contrast between Robert as he was now, and as he was then. A year's hard battling with outward circumstances had subdued him. A year's loneliness had made him eager for sympathy. The necessity for daily labour had been a wholesome discipline. He had grown kind and gentle. Like Charlotte, he looked back upon the past with sorrow and regret. He remembered his own malicious conduct, and it was hateful to him. He repented of it, like many other penitents, when the deed is over and past recall.

It seemed a new existence to have Charlotte by his side—not the spiteful, aggravating Charlotte of other days, but the chastened learner in the school of affliction—the tired wayfarer in the rugged path of life. She, too, had grown kind and gentle, and ready to cling to the first friendly arm that was stretched out to help her.

It was very pleasant to be together; there was so much to say, there would hardly be time to say it in that one Sunday. Hitherto they had been enemies, and the mind and heart of each had been locked up from the other. But they were unlocked now, and forgiveness and tenderness gushed forth. No matter the small, poverty-stricken room, no matter the dinner of herbs, it was better than a stalled ox with hatred therewith. No matter the estrangement of the past; adversity had driven them together, and broken down the barrier between them.

The future did not seem so dreary as it had done some hours ago. They would not have each to stand alone. There would be sympathy and kindness to help them on;—there would be breaks in the cloud that overhung their fortunes;—there would be happy Sundays that they might spend together;—there would be affection to make life less desolate. Union would be strength, and, for the first time in their lives, Charlotte and Robert were agreed to push together.

CHAPTER XXI.

FRED went again, and again, to Philip's house. Philip did not quite approve of his coming; he was grave and distant, but still he allowed him to come; and Fred would sit in the easy-chair by the fire, evening after evening, and watch the game at dominoes, and listen to the children's prattling, and to Marian's reading, and, like his father, his face would become cheerful and pleasant before he went away.

The children had grown accustomed to him, and Carry and he were excellent friends, and even Richard had so far overcome his timidity as to consult him about the red house, and how many windows he should put in it.

Marian was always kind and attentive to Fred. She had pitied him from the first, she had pitied him all along, and retained a vivid recollection of the unfeeling manner in which Charlotte had spoken of him. She thought a little adversity would do Charlotte good, and though she did not extenuate Fred's behaviour to her and to the rest of them, she took a more lenient view of the case than Philip did.

Philip regarded Fred's conduct with indignation and abhorrence, and nothing but the sight of his worn and haggard face had moved his compassion so far as to allow of his presence there at all. But having once admitted him, it was hard to turn him out, especially as he seemed to

cling to them with a strange kind of attachment that it was quite impossible to repel.

Besides, this attachment might be worked upon for good; so Philip hoped, and so Marian felt absolutely sure. She did not despair of Fred doing justice to his family, sooner or later; and whenever Philip shook his head, and talked of not liking him to come, she would plead for him so eloquently, that Philip was always obliged to give in, and declare that Marian was one of the best advocates Fred could have.

Fred's visits to Philip's house had a softening influence upon him. They did more than all the lectures and arguments in the world could have done. He began to covet such a home as Philip had, and to wonder how it was he had never tried conciliation, and whether, if he had, the case would have been the same. He thought of the absent ones with something like tenderness. Their vacant places gave him a pang of sorrow. He tried to discover some redeeming feature in their characters, and to forget what was harsh and unrelenting. His anguish of mind had now a touch of softness in it, that caused him a painful pleasure. There was the same aching void in his heart, but a confused hope that one day it might be filled up. Pride had fallen back, as well she might, before the dawn of natural affection. Love was at hand. Her sunshine had all but made its way into his breast. She was stronger than death, and what death had failed to do, she could accomplish.

One day Fred wrote to his uncle. The good and evil geniuses wrestled within him as he did it, but he wrote to ask what had become of his brothers and sisters, and where they were gone to. He said nothing of helping them, or

of being sorry for what he had done; he was not prepared to go so far as that. His uncle's reply was in sharp stinging words; every line was a reproach. He gave the information Fred wished for, and ended his epistle in the same harsh manner in which he had begun.

Fred tore up the letter, and threw it in the fire. It acted like a killing frost upon his better feelings—like the east wind in spring, that sweeps over some tender plant, and withers its budding leaves. They must wait for sunshine, and more genial air, before they could put forth again.

He became gloomy and morose, and the old sense of desolation, and the hauntings of remorse, came back again. He left off going to see Philip. He could not face Marian's inquiring glances, and Philip's looks of grave displeasure. He could not yield. He had thought he could, but pride and hate were only half vanquished. They gathered up their strength, and carried everything before them.

His solitude was all the gloomier now it had closed round him again. But he would endure it;—he would endure anything rather than yield.

Philip might well despair, and Marian's intercession grow less availing. Fred's good genius might well feel ready to take her flight. It had come to a strange crisis when a year and a half had passed, and there was neither repentance nor restitution. What could bring repentance? What could bow the stubborn heart, and fill up the vacant places, and make a home of this dreary desert? But one divine influence had power to do it, and that was love; and love, as yet, had no admittance.

One evening he was sitting, as usual, indulging bitter

thoughts, when a letter was put into his hand. He supposed it was a business letter, for he had no others, and was about to lay it aside, as he had little inclination for business just then. But the handwriting caught his eye;—he looked eagerly at it;—he tore open the envelope—his hand trembling with impatience. It was from Robert. He thought as much! Should he read it? A begging-letter, no doubt! Robert had come to that at last;—but he would do nothing for him;—no, nothing whatever! He had a great mind to throw the letter in the fire;—it was sure to be full of spite and malice;—and he held it a moment over the blaze.

But, no;—he had better read it;—it would not have the least effect, but he might as well see what Robert was doing, and what he had to say.

He began to read;—his face settling itself into a look of indifference. It ran thus:—

“Have you forgotten us? Have our names no place in your memory or your heart? If so, I fear you will turn a deaf ear to my appeal, and your doors, and your sympathies, will remain as closed to us as ever. It is not for myself I am going to plead. I have wronged you, Fred, as deeply as you have wronged me; and I will bear my reverses without a murmur. I am young and strong, and it is not much hardship to make my way, and turn the tables upon Fortune. But Charlotte—— Fred, if you saw her now, you would not know her;—she is wasting away for very brokenness of heart. A life of incessant toil is killing her. She is ill, and yet she has no home to go to, and no friends to take her in. Her uncle tells her she must work, and she does work: she is plying her needle often till long past

midnight. I have no means of helping her at present, for my own earnings are so small, and I have nothing else. She must work or starve. I would give my life to save her. Fred, it is but a little of your wealth I ask. I am willing to rough it myself; it is no matter what privations I endure; but for her—do not let her die! Save your sister;—give her enough to release her from this drudgery, and the blessing of your brothers and sisters will be upon you. Fred, we have forgiven you;—we pray for you;—we know you cannot be happy to stand alone. Adversity has driven us together—we love each other—we cling to each other. But love cannot ward off an evil like this;—wealth can, and you have wealth. Shall this appeal be made in vain?”

It was the first conciliatory word Fred had ever received from any of them, and the effect was startling. It was an appeal that went straight to his heart, and woke up that long-forgotten chord, till it thrilled through his whole being. Had Robert used reproach, he would have folded his cloak of hardness and cruelty tight about him; but the air grew oppressive, and he must throw it off. His unflinching resolve was staggered. His very soul was melted. What! did they pity *him*—forgive *him*—pray for *him*? He had never thought of that! It was an idea too wild and monstrous; but it struck home to him. He had looked for the demon of hate, and lo! an angel was by his side.

Where was his indifference now—his pitiless resolve to show no mercy? Where was the estrangement of years—the strife, the jar, the turmoil?

O love! more powerful than death! it was your time to triumph now! It was your touch that broke his chains!



Natural affection rose, like some conquering spirit, and pride fell back, and hate disappeared, like the morning clouds when the sun comes forth. Love! Was anything more sweet—was anything more powerful? She could bow that stubborn will—see! it begins to yield; she could bring repentance—witness his genial tears! And restitution—O how swiftly will he fly to make it! The vacant places will be filled up, the severed links united, the olive-branch of peace will be brought back, and the very wilderness rejoice, and blossom as the rose!

CHAPTER XXII.

“I WONDER what has become of Fred,” said Marian, one evening, to Philip, after the children were gone to bed; “we have not seen anything of him for nearly a month.”

“He is ashamed to come, I think,” replied Philip, who was busy drawing, as usual; “and, to say the truth, I am heartily glad of it.”

“O why, Philip?” cried Marian, reproachfully.

“Because it has saved me a very unpleasant duty,—that of telling him he must never come again.”

“But that would have been so unkind! I am sure you would not have had the heart to do it.”

“I must have had the firmness, Marian, whether I had the heart or not,” said Philip, smiling at the idea of his

being suspected of unkindness ; " it will never do for us to encourage him in his evil deeds."

" But we do not encourage him ; we are always trying to make him better ; so your argument goes for nothing," replied Marian, triumphantly.

" We seem to encourage him,—we countenance him, at all events, by allowing him to come ; we do indeed, Marian," added Philip, looking up at her.

" I do not believe it," said Marian ; " you used not to say so. Philip, you are growing quite——"

" Well, go on, and finish the sentence," said Philip, laughing,—*" quite hard-hearted, I suppose ? "*

" No, no, Philip ! I never said that."

" You half thought so, though."

" No, nor thought so, Philip. But still I do think you are rather hard upon poor Fred. He looks so ill and miserable——"

" And serve him right," interrupted Philip ; " the more ill and miserable he is the better."

" O Philip ! do not say so."

" Yes, I do say so. He ought to suffer. Think of the rest of them, what they must be enduring, driven out of house and home, as if they had been dogs. I could have forgiven a storm of passion, and then over ; but to persist in it a year and a half,—it is monstrous ! No, Marian, I will not have him here again ; so it is of no use talking."

" But what is to become of him, Philip, if we turn him out ? Who else will be kind to him ? "

" People cannot, ought not, to be kind to him. He has trampled on humanity and justice, and until he makes restitution, he must be an outcast from society."

"Poor Fred!" said Marian, sighing, "you are the most unfortunate being in the world!"

Philip made no answer. He looked quite stern and resolute, and as if no argument whatever would have power to move him.

Marian felt very unhappy, and, for a wonder, she and her brother worked on in silence.

At length Marian laid down her work, and said hurriedly,—“There he is at the door, Philip! Now, pray do not say anything to him,—do not look coldly at him.”

“I must look and say what I feel, Marian,—intense disapprobation of his conduct.”

Fred came in, unusually brisk and cheerful. He had brought a bunch of violets for Marian, and when he had shaken hands with her, and returned Philip's distant recognition, he sat down in the easy-chair, and began to rattle away so fast that nobody else could get in a word. He had been a drive into the country, he said, and never enjoyed anything so much. What an early spring it was, to be sure!—he did not believe the winter would come back, though it was only the middle of March. The trees were all budding, and the birds all singing,—it would be a charming spring. Did Marian think of going into the country this summer?

“I hardly know yet,” said Marian, who was doing her best to be civil for two—herself and Philip—“it is so difficult for us to get away from home.”

“Ah! there is no place like home,” said Fred, warming his hands at the fire,—for, in spite of his early spring, the evenings were cold and frosty; “but I mean to get a run

out somewhere or other, for all that. A little change does one good now and then."

Philip looked up, and was about to speak, when Marian stopped him, and asked Fred where he meant to go to.

"Devonshire, I think; but it will depend on so many things."

"Fred—" began Philip.

"Devonshire is a beautiful county," interposed Marian; "we have some relations there, and once upon a time we went to visit them. I never enjoyed myself more in my life."

"I say, Fred—" again attempted Philip.

"Only the climate is rather too mild, especially in the south," continued Marian, speaking very fast. "It is all very well for consumptive people; but I like the north part of the county better. My uncle lives at Ilfracombe. Do you know that place at all?"

"No; but I should like to hear you describe it."

Philip had risen from his drawing, and stood by the fire, bidding his time. It was rather a long time to bide, for Marian began a very tedious description, amplified as much as possible, and taking in, not only Ilfracombe, but every bit of scenery she was acquainted with in the whole county. She had the game in her own hands, for she knew, however long-winded she might be, Philip would wait patiently until she had done. And she had done at last, for even Fred seemed tired out with the subject, and gave sundry signs of not wishing for any further information.

Then Philip, before she had time to begin again, said very majestically,—

"A word or two with you, Fred. How much longer is this to last?"

"What do you mean?" asked Fred, carelessly, and leaning back in his chair.

"I mean your refusing to do your brothers and sisters justice," said Philip sternly.

"O Philip! do not speak so!" cried Marian, getting up, and standing between them.

"I must speak my mind, Marian—I cannot, I will not, encourage him in his injustice."

"Hush! try him a little longer;—do not drive him away," said Marian, pleadingly.

"I cannot try him any longer. There is a limit to forbearance. If we encourage him past that, we become a party to his act."

"But who can tell where that limit is?" returned Marian, almost with tears.

Fred got up, and laughed—such a clear ringing laugh—that Philip and Marian started, and looked at him in wonder. And he looked at them, too, and did not seem in the least troubled or abashed by what they had been saying.

"So you are going to shut your doors against me;—that is a very pleasant circumstance truly!" exclaimed he, taking up his hat, and feeling in his pocket, as if for his gloves.

"Until you have thrown open your doors to your own kindred," returned Philip, "as I said once before, there can be nothing in common between us."

"Well, well! I am going!—but you may as well look at that first," said he, taking a roll of parchment from his pocket, and throwing it on the table.

"O Philip! he has done it! I knew he would! Did not I tell you?" cried Marian, seizing the parchment. "Look here! look here!"

"Hold it steady, Marian. I cannot read it," said Philip, looking over her shoulder.

"Yes, I have done it!" cried Fred, coming up to them; "I have flung that weight from my conscience at last—I could bear it no longer! And now, Philip, have I passed the limit of forbearance? Will you turn me out now?"

"Here is my hand, Fred," said Philip warmly; "I congratulate you with all my heart."

"And I congratulate you too," cried Marian eagerly, and with tears of joy.

"But how did it happen, Fred?" said Philip.

"*That* did it," said Fred, taking out Robert's letter and handing it to them. "I could not resist that. It broke me down completely. I cried like a very child. Work or starve, indeed! Pretty language for a sister of mine to use!"

"Poor thing! she had no alternative," said Philip, giving back the letter.

Fred turned quickly round as if indignant; then recollecting himself,—*"You are right, Philip. If she dies, I shall be a murderer."*

"But she will not die, she will get well!" said Marian cheerfully. "Of course you will have her home, and nurse her. O yes, I am sure you will!"

"And the children?" added Philip. "May I ask you what has become of them?"

"The children?" said Fred, considering; "let me see—

O, they are all the better for the nice drive I gave them this morning."

"What! are they come home? How glad I am!" cried Marian.

"This is just as it should be," said Philip heartily.

"I fetched them home yesterday," continued Fred; "they were rather shy at first, but we are excellent friends now. We have set up some dominoes, Philip; I think there is a charm in dominoes."

"There is a charm in kindness, Fred. Those children will love you as much as your heart can desire."

"Ah, it desires so much love. It is hungering and thirsting for it," continued Fred. "O, if Robert and Lotte should—but no, I will not imagine that; I will expect them to be kind—I will treat them as if they had been so all along. That is the way, Philip, is it not?"

"Exactly the way, and not any other. But when do they come?"

"I do not know; I have not heard. I wrote and said, 'Come as soon as possible.' I have been so busy getting everything ready, or I should have seen you before. This settlement has been drawn up a week."

"There, Philip, I told you how it would be!" said Marian, when Fred was gone. "Now, confess that you were wrong;" and she playfully seized her brother's hands, and tried to make him go down upon his knees.

"Is that the game, Marian? Come then, I can make you kneel directly. There now, it is your turn to confess instead of mine."

"Ah, Philip, it is might against right—the strong against

the weak," said Marian laughing, as her brother compelled her to kneel on the hearthrug.

"Now, Marian, confess! confess!"

"What am I to confess?"

"Confess, what is it makes *you* take such an interest in Fred?"

"*I* take an interest in him!" said Marian, turning very red. "Now, Philip, do not be silly—let me get up—the fire is so hot—I do not like it."

"Because I am sure he has shown himself a very bad disposition," said Philip spitefully.

"You have never seen his real disposition yet."

"Of course he found it did not answer to hold out any longer. He was tired of living by himself," said Philip, with great unconcern.

"No, that was not it! it is ungenerous of you to say it was!" cried Marian vehemently.

"I am sure I do not know what else it could be," said Philip, shrugging his shoulders,—“unless he thought he should not live long, and then they must come in for his money, whether or not.”

"It was not! he did not!" cried Marian, quite heated and excited; "it was because he has a good heart with it all; and it would have shown itself, if they had tried conciliation before. You see a word of kindness did it;—that one letter was enough. I do not wonder he could not love them, when they were so cruel and harsh to him. If they come back and behave well, he will be as kind a brother as ever lived."

"Kinder than I am, of course?" said Philip, pretending to be jealous.

"O Philip! now, you are only teasing me," cried Marian, walking straight into Philip's arms, which he had opened on purpose. "There, kiss me, and be good; you are quite naughty to-night!"

"I am only making believe, Marian, as I did with Carry and the silver pennies!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE fire burned brightly in Mr. Harland's drawing-room; the curtains were drawn, and the tea stood upon the table. Fanny and Willy were playing at dominoes on the hearth-rug, while Fred was walking backwards and forwards, in a state of extreme excitement.

Fred was a different being, now the evil spirit had departed. The expression of his face was softened, and the furrows in it had almost disappeared. His mind was at rest;—he could sleep in peace, for he was no longer haunted by Remorse. The plaintive voice was hushed, now its pleadings were responded to. He would be kind to them, not for his father's sake alone, but because his heart was drawn towards them; he was prepared to love and care for them as he had never done before, and there was something in that love and care that already brought its own reward.

He had been expecting them all day, and as yet they had not come. He had made every preparation; their rooms were open to receive them, and the vacant chairs brought forward from their places. It would be a strange meeting!

He hardly knew how they would behave to him ; he had nothing, in the past, to encourage him,—nothing on which to build the fabric of happiness he was intending to rear. He had nothing to trust to but love, and that, Philip had told him, was omnipotent. He began to feel anxious, and listened eagerly for the sound of wheels. Something stopped at the door,—it must be them ! and Fred, in a tumult of new and extraordinary emotions, hurried to the top of the stairs.

It must be Charlotte and Robert, and yet, at first sight, he did not know them. That sickly-looking girl, so poverty-stricken in her dress and appearance, never can be Charlotte ! If so, the world has used her roughly, and left but little trace of what she was before. And how ill she is !—she seems half fainting with the fatigue of her journey. She is violently agitated at the sight of home ; and that young man, with a face sunken and careworn, but full of kindness, is helping her out, and trying to soothe her. Can that be Robert ? It is too kind and sympathizing for him !

Yes, it is Robert ; and in another moment Charlotte has two brothers, instead of one, to support and encourage her. And Fred's arm is round her, and he stammers some words of welcome, so warm from his own heart, they cannot fail to meet with a response in hers. And he shakes Robert by the hand, and bids him welcome too ; and they go upstairs together—Charlotte leaning on them both—and then there is a cry of recognition, and the children come running out to meet them.

Fred leads them into the drawing-room, that looks so warm, and bright, and cheerful, with its curtains drawn, and the hissing urn standing on the table.

How strange to find themselves assembled there once more! What a crowd of recollections rushed into their minds! How vividly came back that storm of strife, which, like a whirlwind, had swept them apart, and scattered them, as it were, to the mercy of the winds!

Every face bore witness to the struggle that had been endured. It was visible in Charlotte's stooping form, and Robert's sunken cheek, and Fred's wasted figure. Even the little ones were not unscathed; and, as they looked at each other, they said, one to the other, "How much you must have suffered—and you—and you!" And they wept together, as well they might; for the struggle had cost them dear; and, even now it was over, repentance for the past must mingle with their joy.

They had come home again—but home must be made sacred by affection, or it would be still no place of rest. They must begin to live afresh—they must keep the bond of peace unbroken, or the demon of strife would break loose again. The past would be ever at hand to teach them a salutary lesson, and their own humbled spirits would be less inclined for harshness and rebellion.

The "Bundle of Sticks" has been gathered up. Let us hope that every day will bind them closer together. Let us hope that peace will reign at last, where all has been so wild and stormy,—that they, who have sown in tears, may reap in joy,—and that it may be said of them, "Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

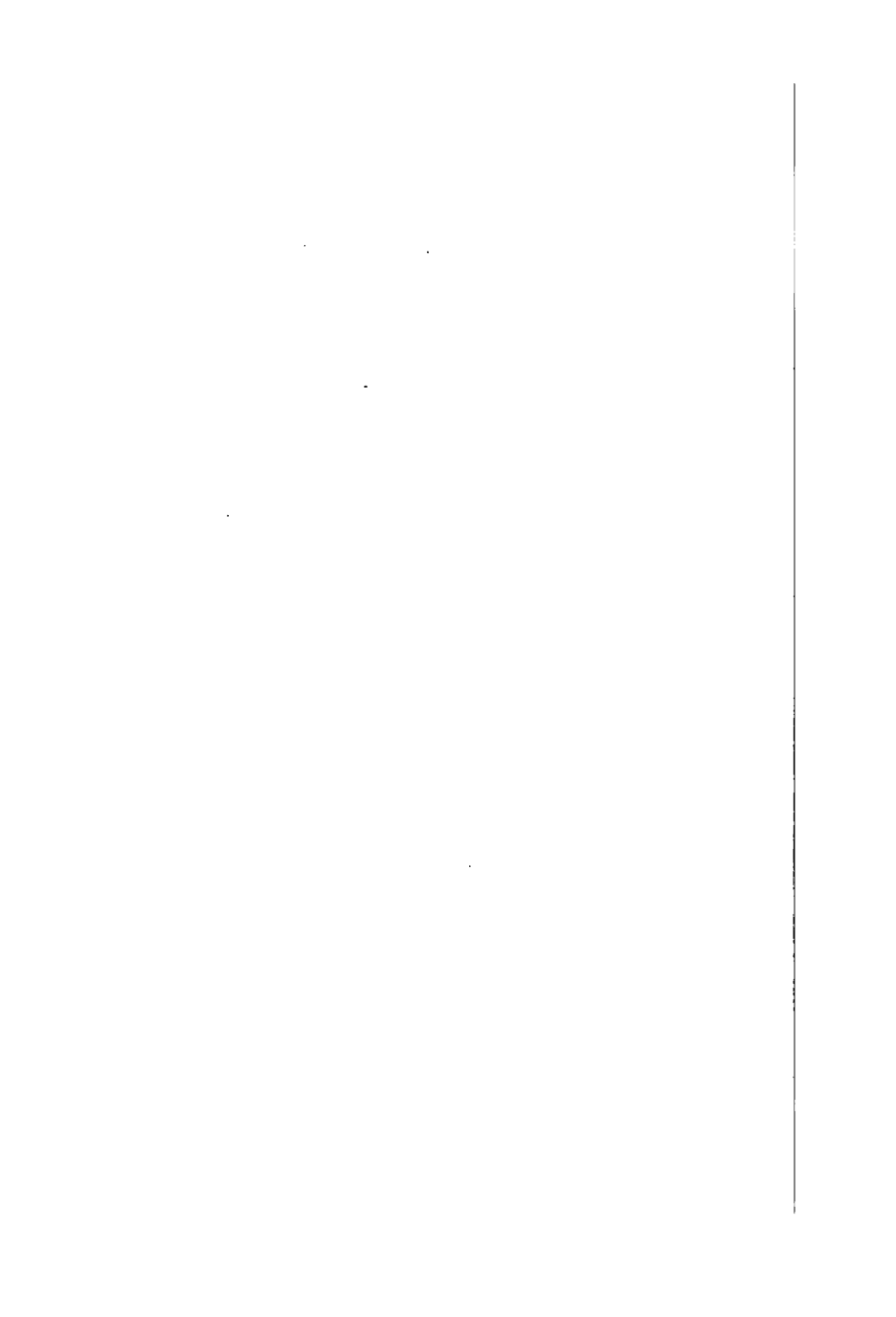
It only remains to say one word of Philip and Marian. The marriage between Philip and Lilla took place about a year after the events we have just related, and they went

to reside in Mr. Wilkinson's house, as neither uncle nor niece could bear the idea of separation.

Philip, in time, became as successful an architect as Mr. Wilkinson had been, and triumphantly put the last stone to his castle in the air.

Marian and the little ones continued to live together, and then Richard went to college, and Marian and Carry were left alone. Charlotte Harland recovered her health, and she and Marian were very great friends. It required some effort on Marian's part to overcome disagreeable associations; but these were obliged to give way before Charlotte's softened manners and altered conduct. They grew attached to each other, and report whispered of a tie that was about to draw them still nearer; but whether this was true, or not, we hardly undertake to declare. We only know that Fred was building himself a house, very near to Mr. Wilkinson's; that Philip drew out the plan, and that Marian was consulted at every step of its progress. Next spring it will be finished, and then the little world of Linford may be set right on this important point.

THE END.



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